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THE NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY

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LIBERTY TREE: A GENEALOGY

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER

THE colonial quarrel with England precipitated by the Stamp Act assumed many outward forms. The rôle of the printed word—broadsides, pamphlets, the newspaper press, the resolutions of official and unofficial bodies—is well known, but the part played by symbols, though perhaps equally important, is generally overlooked. In this department of silent propaganda no single venture paid richer dividends than the Tree of Liberty. Effigies and placards in its boughs expressed the popular reaction to British measures, its sturdy trunk bespoke the underlying fixity of purpose, and the ground at its base provided a rallying point for mob demonstrations.

The Englishman Tom Paine, arriving at a late stage of the controversy, at once grasped its significance. This congenital rebel, soon to detonate his great blast for independence in the pamphlet *Common Sense*, conjured up a fit origin for the Tree. Inspired to verse in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* of June, 1775, he explained that the Goddess of Liberty had transplanted the "fair budding branch" from the "gardens above" to "this peaceable shore," where the "fame of its fruit" drew men from many nations.

Unmindful of names or distinctions they came,
 For freemen like brothers agree,
 With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
 And their temple was *Liberty Tree*. . . .
 But hear, O ye swains, ('tis a tale most profane)
 How all the tyrannical powers,
 King, Commons, and Lords, are uniting amain,
 To cut down this guardian of ours;
 From the east to the west, blow the trumpet to arms,
 Thro' the land let the sound of it flee,
 Let the far and the near—all unite with a cheer,
 In defence of our *Liberty Tree*.

This rousing poem, set to the tune of "The Gods of the Greeks," won immediate favor and was widely reprinted in the colonial press.¹

I

The tree as an emblem of freedom may, however, be accounted for less fancifully. The New World's woods and templed hills, afterward to be celebrated in song by Samuel F. Smith, afforded the settlers daily evidence of a life removed from ancient fetters. As early as 1652 the Massachusetts authorities minted a shilling with the bas-relief (presumably) of a pine tree, and about fifty years later a pine-tree flag came into use.² Meanwhile outstanding historical incidents hal- lowed particular trees. At Annapolis, Maryland, a tulip pop- lar became famous as marking the spot where the Indians in 1652 had agreed to open the Chesapeake region to settlement; in Connecticut a tree in Hartford won renown as the Charter Oak because the colonial charter had supposedly been hidden

¹ "LIBERTY TREE. A new Song," by "Atlanticus," *Pennsylvania Ledger*, Aug. 12, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 6; *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 11; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, Sept. 12; *Pennsylvania Evening-Post*, Sept. 16. Joel Barlow, trying his hand at the same theme in the 1790's, wrote, apparently for his own amusement, "A Genealogy of the Tree of Liberty," which traced its origin to a phallic symbol common to the mythologies of ancient Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, Greece and other lands. MS. Notebook, Box 4, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

² M. M. Quaife, *The Flag of the United States* (New York, 1942), 39-40.

there in 1687 to prevent its seizure by Sir Edmund Andros for King James II; and in Pennsylvania the people honored the Treaty Elm under which William Penn in 1683 had concluded a long-time peace with the Indians. The old English practice of the Maypole—a sort of denuded tree—may also have had an influence upon the colonists, for, as we shall see, in the critical decade before 1776 they often used a Liberty Pole as a substitute for the Liberty Tree.

It was the furor created by the passage of the Stamp Act that begot the original Tree of Liberty. The time was August 14, 1765; the place, Boston; the occasion, a mass demonstration to frighten Andrew Oliver, the stamp distributor, into resigning before the hated law should go into effect. The tree, then known simply as the Great Tree, was a majestic elm at the corner of the present Essex and Washington Streets, not far from the Common. Daybreak revealed a strange alteration in its appearance. From its branches dangled an effigy of Oliver with the inscription in large letters:

Fair freedom's glorious cause I've meanly quitted,
For the sake of self;
But ah! the Devil has me outwitted,
And instead of *stamping* others, I've *hang'd* myself.

To remove any doubt as to the verse's meaning, another bough displayed the devil, a copy of the Stamp Act in his hand, peeking forth from a huge boot (emblematic of the Earl of Bute, First Lord of the Treasury). That evening a mob, headed by nearly "fifty tradesmen, decently dressed," paraded the dummies through the streets and, after stopping to pull down the stamp office, burned the images within sight of Oliver's dwelling. Then they broke into the house and smashed some of his furniture. The distributor required no further warning. The next day he made known that he would not serve.³

³ Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, III (London, 1828), 120-122; *Boston-Gazette*, Aug. 19, 26, 1765; *Boston Evening-Post*, Aug. 19; Frank Moore, editor, *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution* (New York, 1856), 20-21 n. For an alleged picture of the tree, see Justin Winsor, editor, *The Memorial History of Boston* (Boston, 1880-1881), III, 159.

A tree, hitherto undistinguished save for size from countless others in the town, thus suddenly attained political stature. The newspapers reported the proceedings at length, and an anonymous rhymester added his version in a handbill acclaiming the "more than common fruit" that had strangely appeared in the branches.⁴ Though the elm may have already become known in patriot circles as Liberty Tree, its formal christening occurred on September 11 when news reached Boston that the Grenville ministry had fallen and that William Pitt, a foe of the Stamp Act, was to be the new Prime Minister. To signalize the occasion, a large copper plate bearing in gold the words "The Tree of Liberty" was affixed to the trunk, and a British flag, inscribed "Pitt the Supporter of Liberty and the Terror of Tyrants," was hung from one of the top limbs.⁵

Though the report of Pitt's elevation presently turned out to be unwarranted, Liberty Tree continued to serve as a visual reminder to one and all that the colonists stood jealous guard against British encroachments. In the language of a Tory, the once harmless elm became "consecrated as an Idol for the Mob to worship" and as a place for inflicting the "Tree Ordeal" on those "whom the Rioters pitched upon as State delinquents."⁶ On February 14, 1766, the branches were pruned so that, as a newspaper noted, "the Tree is now become a great ornament to the street." The item, which went on to say that this had been done "agreeable to a vote pass'd by the true-born sons of LIBERTY at their last meeting," constituted the first public announcement of that organization's connection with the elm.⁷ No doubt could have existed in anybody's mind, how-

⁴ "Liberty Tree Broadside," Boston Public Library, *Bulletin*, 4 ser., 1 (1919), 328-329.

⁵ *Boston-Gazette*, Sept. 16, 1765.

⁶ Peter Oliver, "The Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion to the Year 1776" (*Gay Transcripts*, Massachusetts Historical Society), 71. The writer was a brother of the resigned stamp officer.

⁷ The "carpenters" who did the pruning refused pay "as it was for the public good." *Boston Evening-Post*, Feb. 17, 1766.

ever, since the Tree's very name indicated the Sons' sponsorship, and the adjacent grounds, known as Liberty Hall, served as their gathering place. One member, the shoemaker Ebenezer Mackintosh, indeed was reputed to be the "First Captain General of Liberty Tree."⁸ Behind the scenes, leading patriots encouraged and guided the Sons of Liberty. It was in vain for Samuel Adams to say "he did not know—he could not tell—he wanted to inquire," when asked by someone at Liberty Tree what the effigies signified. His kinsman John recorded the conversation in his diary with an eloquent absence of comment.⁹

Naturally Liberty Tree figured prominently on November 1, 1765, the day the Stamp Act became operative. This time two new images adorned the boughs: George Grenville, the Prime Minister responsible for the measure, and John Huske, a member of Parliament who was believed to have suggested it to him. A placard added:

But if some Brethren I could Name,
Who shar'd the Crime, should share the shame,
This glorious Tree tho' big and tall,
Indeed would never hold 'em all.

In the afternoon the mob carted the effigies about the town, then hanged them on the gallows and, finally, "tore them to Pieces and flung their Limbs with Indignation into the Air."¹⁰ Paul Revere's allegorical engraving of the occasion reflected the special rage of the townsmen against the New Hampshire-born Huske by picturing him alone on the Tree.¹¹

In the weeks that followed, rumors began to circulate that the late stamp master was reconsidering his enforced resignation. This incensed the Sons of Liberty who, no longer con-

⁸ G. P. Anderson, "Ebenezer Mackintosh: Stamp Act Rioter and Patriot," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Publications*, xxvi (1924-1926), 29.

⁹ John Adams, *Works* (Boston, 1850-1856), II, 180.

¹⁰ *Boston-Gazette*, Nov. 4, 1765; *Boston Evening-Post*, Nov. 4; Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 135-136.

¹¹ E. H. Goss, *The Life of Colonel Paul Revere* (Boston, 1891), I, 31-35.

tent with tormenting Oliver in effigy, now summoned him in person to Liberty Tree. Escorted by Mackintosh, he appeared at high noon on December 17, and in the presence of an estimated two thousand persons took solemn oath before Justice of the Peace Richard Dana, a leading member of the bar, that he "never would, directly or indirectly, by himself, or any under him," help put the Stamp Act into effect.¹²

But Liberty Tree could gloat as well as glower. When word of the repeal of the law arrived, cannon under the Tree boomed the glad tidings. A few days later, on Monday, May 19, 1766, came the formal celebration with fireworks, the pealing of bells, "all Sorts of Musick," and Liberty Tree "decorated in a splendid Manner." An enormous obelisk of oiled paper, designed by Paul Revere and illuminated after nightfall by 280 interior lamps, dominated the proceedings on the Common. The symbolic scenes on its four sides included a picture of Liberty Tree with an angel poised above it and an eagle nesting in its topmost branches. After the rejoicing, the obelisk was to have been removed to the actual Tree "as a standing Monument of this glorious Æra," but unhappily it caught fire during the evening and went up in smoke. Nonetheless Revere's elaborate copper engraving of the obelisk kept its memory alive and helped hearten the popular party in the trying days ahead.¹³

II

Boston's "sacred elm" set an example for other communities and provinces, though many of them did not take heed until Parliament unrepentantly embarked on a new scheme of colonial taxation. In nearby Braintree, John Adams early in May, 1766, came upon a "likely young button-wood tree" labeled "The Tree of Liberty, and cursed is he who cuts this tree!" "I never heard a hint of it till I saw it," he wrote in his

¹² Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 139-140; Adams, *Works*, II, 156.

¹³ *Boston-Gazette*, May 19, 26, 1766; *Boston Evening-Post*, May 26; Goss, *Revere*, I, 35-36; Esther Forbes, *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* (Boston, 1942), 115-117.

diary, "but I hear that some persons grumble, and threaten to girdle it."¹⁴ There is no record, however, that it suffered any harm. The Dedham Sons of Liberty, waiting till the Stamp Act was repealed, erected a "Pillar of Liberty" on July 22. It was an eight-foot timber column set on a granite block four feet high and supported a wooden bust of William Pitt in recognition of the members of Parliament who had "saved America from impending slavery."¹⁵

At Newport, Rhode Island, William Reed, a well-to-do merchant, gave the Sons of Liberty a large buttonwood on April 14, 1766, as their Liberty Tree with the adjoining land for holding their meetings. It was, he said, not merely to signalize the current opposition to the Stamp Act, but to be "emblematical of *Public Liberty* . . . in all Times and Ages forever hereafter." The next year, on the anniversary of the repeal, a large copper plate inscribed "Tree of Liberty" was formally mounted on the trunk.¹⁶ Norwich, Connecticut, also dedicated a Liberty Tree, and under its boughs in 1767 celebrated the first anniversary of the demise of the Stamp Act.¹⁷

In New York the Tree of Liberty, though it was at first called that, was actually a pine mast or flagstaff. The Sons of Liberty placed it on the Common (now City Hall Park) near the British barracks on June 4, 1766, as part of the daylong festivities over the rescinding of the Stamp Act, and they kept it there afterward as a "Monument of that happy Event." Not surprisingly, its presence nettled the soldiers, and on August 10 some of them cut it down. This vandalism, said Holt's *New-York Gazette*, "gave great Uneasiness, and the next Day occasion'd two Frays between the Town People and the Soldiers," in which several civilians were hurt. The following

¹⁴ *Works*, II, 194.

¹⁵ Charles Warren, *Jacobin and Junto* (Cambridge, 1931), 33-34.

¹⁶ *Newport Mercury*, April 21, 1766; *Providence Gazette*, March 28, 1767; Roderick Terry, "The History of the Liberty Tree of Newport," *Newport Historical Society, Bulletin*, no. 27 (1918), 9-12.

¹⁷ Frances M. Caulkins, *History of Norwich* (Hartford, 1866), 366, confuses this Tree with the later addition to Liberty Poles in Connecticut.

day the Sons of Liberty raised a new Liberty Pole, only to have it too fall victim to the military on September 23.

A third one, erected within twenty-four hours, fared somewhat better, lasting till March 18, 1767, when the observation of the first anniversary of the Stamp Act repeal provoked the redcoats into repeating their performance after the celebrants had dispersed. Forewarned by experience, the Sons of Liberty on the nineteenth reared a more substantial shaft reinforced with iron hoops, which withstood all efforts in the next few days to hack it down, dig it out or blow it up. At this point Governor Sir Henry Moore ordered the soldiers to desist, and for the next three years a semblance of peace reigned.¹⁸ The Liberty Pole henceforth was to rival Liberty Tree as a symbol of the colonial cause.

Neither the one emblem nor the other, however, played a part in the patriotic proceedings south of New York at this stage of the controversy. During the summer and autumn of 1765, Christopher Gadsden met occasionally with a group of Charleston mechanics under a "noble live oak" in Mazyck's pasture near his home in order to discuss tactics, and in the fall of 1766 Gadsden addressed them upon the folly of relaxing their resistance so long as the Declaratory Act, which had accompanied the repeal, stood on the statute books.¹⁹ The name Liberty Tree, however, was not formally adopted until later.

III

The passage of the Townshend Acts in the summer of 1767 revived the dispute with England in intensified form. Again Boston was the storm center. Probably with an eye to the troubles that lay ahead, the Sons of Liberty in August surmount-

¹⁸ For the story of the successive Poles, see John and James Montresor, *The Montresor Journals* (New-York Historical Society, *Collections*, xiv, 1881), 382-384; Thomas Gage, *Correspondence with the Secretaries of State* (C. E. Carter, editor, New Haven, 1931-1933), I, 103-104; anon., "The Liberty Pole on the Commons," *New-York Historical Society, Bulletin*, III (1919-1920), 109-114.

¹⁹ Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences, Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* (Charleston, 1851), 27-29, 35.

ed Liberty Tree with a mast from which a hoisted flag, the gift of John Hancock, served to notify the members of meetings.²⁰ On March 17, 1768, the Customs Commissioners, appointed under the new dispensation, heard that they were to be summoned to the elm the next day to resign; but if the report was true, something went wrong, for the Sons of Liberty actually did no more than hang images of two revenue officers in the branches and then march threateningly on the home of one of the pair without doing it any damage.²¹ A more common practice was to post signs on the trunk black-listing persons who offended the patriots. This obloquy, for example, befell the seventeen members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives who, contrary to their ninety-two bolder brethren, voted on June 30, 1768, to rescind the circular letter which the House had earlier sent the other colonial assemblies to ask them to denounce the Townshend measures.²² The Tree also cut a figure on other occasions. Governor Francis Bernard, when recalled by the British government in 1769 for having bungled his duties, was ironically cheered on his way by flags in its boughs.²³ The following February a great crowd assembled at the elm before marching to the funeral of a boy whom a customs informer had accidentally killed when being attacked by a mob.²⁴

Apparently no new Liberty Trees made their appearance at this juncture in Massachusetts, except at Petersham in 1768 and briefly at Harvard College the same year.²⁵ In Cambridge the students, aping their elders, chose an elm for their Liberty Tree and congregated under it to remonstrate against stricter

²⁰ Francis Bernard and others, *Letters to the Ministry* (Boston, 1769), 25.

²¹ Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, 2d ser., x (1895-1896), 66; LV (1921-1922), 269-270.

²² Letter to Lord Hillsborough, July 1, 1768, Bernard Papers (Sparks MSS., Harvard College Library), VI, 324-325.

²³ Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 254.

²⁴ Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 269; Adams, *Works*, II, 227-228.

²⁵ *Boston-Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1768; Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 187; S. E. Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge, 1936), 133.

faculty regulations for class attendance. As Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson jeered, "The spirit of liberty spread where it was not intended." At Dedham, however, some Tories on May 12, 1769, destroyed the Pillar of Liberty erected there three years before.²⁶

Outside the Bay Colony the attachment to Liberty Trees and Liberty Poles was frequently in evidence. In Newport, Rhode Island, the inhabitants now put up a Pole at a distance from their Tree and displayed colors on both on every appropriate occasion. In 1770, when the site of the Pole was about to be sold by its private owner to make way for a house, the Sons of Liberty mounted a flagstaff on the Tree itself, as had the Bostonians before them.²⁷ Meanwhile, on July 25, 1768, Providence had consecrated a great elm to the cause. The dedication included a spirited discourse delivered from a platform in the boughs, followed by the main orator who, invoking "that Liberty which our Forefathers sought out, and found under Trees, and in the Wilderness," asked that the Sons of Liberty "often repair hither, to confirm and strengthen each other," and, "like the House of David, grow stronger and stronger."²⁸ In neighboring Connecticut the people of Norwich decked their Tree with banners and inscriptions on June 7, 1768, to celebrate the election of John Wilkes to Parliament, and on September 8 they staged a fiery demonstration there against the Customs Commissioners in Boston.²⁹

Governor Bernard, we may be sure, was not the only British colonial official whom the patriot emblem reminded of Jack

²⁶ Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 36.

²⁷ Save for 1773, the annual celebrations of the repeal of the Stamp Act continued until the eve of hostilities in 1775. Then, as the Reverend Ezra Stiles observed with singular restraint, the practice ceased because intervening events had convinced the people that the repeal had not been prompted by "generous fraternal principles, as America first conceived." *Literary Diary* (F. B. Dexter, editor, New York, 1901), 1, 6-7, 42, 96, 217, 437, 527; *Newport Mercury*, March 21, 1774.

²⁸ Harriet S. Tapley, *Salem Imprints, 1768-1825* (Salem, 1927), 14.

²⁹ Caulkins, *History of Norwich*, 368.

Cade's "Oak of Reformation."³⁰ A Tory writer in New York, putting it differently, declared that for many persons liberty had come to mean the "*Happiness of Assembling in the open Air, and performing idolatrous and vociferous Acts of Worship, to a Stick of Wood, called a Liberty Pole.*"³¹ Behind this bitter remark lay a renewal of the struggle over the New York Pole carried to the point of bloodshed. Though the most recent shaft had stood since March, 1767, friction had persisted between the citizenry and the soldiers and been aggravated by the legislature's enforced compliance with the Billeting Act, one of the Townshend measures.

On the night of January 16, 1770, a group of redcoats, after having tried unsuccessfully a few evenings before, felled the Liberty Pole.³² The next day a mass meeting, which had originally been called to berate the Billeting Act, assembled at the scene, and the three thousand persons angrily resolved to treat any soldiers found thereafter abroad after dark "as Enemies to the Peace of this City." The following morning some regulars were discovered nailing up placards in prominent places deriding the resolutions, and this brought on a street fight in which several civilians and soldiers suffered severe wounds. Minor clashes occurred in the ensuing days, and on the twenty-second General Thomas Gage ordered his men to keep to their quarters henceforth unless accompanied by a noncommissioned officer. The major encounter, known in history as the Battle of Golden Hill, preceded by some six weeks the Boston Massacre.

As an additional preventive measure the city government refused leave to place another Liberty Pole on the Common, but the Sons of Liberty countered by buying a small private

³⁰ To Lord Hillsborough, June 16, 18, 1768, Bernard and others, *Letters to the Ministry*, 25.

³¹ "The Dougliad," *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, April 23, 1770.

³² This account rests upon the *New-York Journal*, Jan. 18, 1770; *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*, Jan. 22, Feb. 5; "Liberty Pole on the Commons," *New-York Historical Society, Bulletin*, III, 114-127.

lot nearby for the purpose. On February 6, six horses, gaily decorated and accompanied by several thousand persons, hauled the great pine mast from the shipyard through the streets to the site. When erected, it stood forty-six feet above the ground and was topped with a flagstaff of twenty-two feet supporting a gilt vane bearing the word "Liberty." For safety's sake the Sons braced this new "Monument of Freedom" with iron hoops and vertical iron strips and sank it twelve feet below the surface.³³ On March 25 a band of soldiers tried to pull off the flagstaff but failed. New York's fifth Liberty Pole survived until after the onset of the war.

In Charleston, South Carolina, the oak where Gadsden had connived with the mechanics in Stamp Act times was formally christened the Tree of Liberty by a similar gathering on the afternoon of October 1, 1768. That night, fireworks were set off about the trunk, the boughs shone with lights, and the jubilant company as a gesture of intercolonial unity lifted their glasses to "The glorious Ninety-Two Anti-Rescinders of Massachusetts Bay."³⁴ During the next year and a half Charleston's Liberty Tree witnessed frequent assemblages to sustain and stiffen the nonimportation regulations which the citizens, like the colonists elsewhere, had instituted against the Townshend Acts. Under its branches, too, public meetings imposed penalties on violators.³⁵ A prolix poet in the *South-Carolina Gazette*, September 21, 1769, undoubtedly expressed the prevalent view when he apostrophized the oak with such sentiments as:

No Soil e'er grew a Tree so fair,
Whose Beauty can with thine compare. . . .
Hither resort the Friends of Man
His common Rights and Claims to scan. . . .

³³ *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, Feb. 5, 1770; *New-York Journal*, Feb. 8.

³⁴ *Pennsylvania Journal*, Oct. 27, 1768; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government* (New York, 1899), 604-605.

³⁵ McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government*, 645, 650, 654, 664-665, 668-670, 673-674.

Rights! which declare, "That all are free
"In Person and in Property. . . .
"And that, when other Laws take Place,
"Not to *resist*, wou'd be Disgrace;
"Not to *resist*, wou'd treach'rous be,
"Treach'rous to Society."³⁶

IV

With the almost total abrogation of the Townshend duties in the spring of 1770, the colonies one by one abandoned their economic war against England save in regard to tea. This one tax Parliament retained as an assertion of right. For that reason the more resolute patriots strove to avert a general reopening of trade. Thus a Charleston meeting at Liberty Tree on June 27 condemned the precipitate action of Rhode Island and Georgia in deserting the nonimportation system and decreed a boycott against them. On August 22 a similar gathering at the Tree cut off commercial relations with New York city until its inhabitants should atone "for their treacherous Separation from their Countrymen."³⁷ Though sentiment in Philadelphia was divided as to New York's defection, one newspaper scribe maliciously invited the residents of the rival city to send on their Liberty Pole since "they can, by their *late conduct*, have no further use for it." This gibe, however, was unjust to Manhattan's Sons of Liberty, the guardians of the Pole, for despite their best efforts they had been outmaneuvered by the "Mercantile Dons."³⁸ In any event, New York's action created an irreparable breach in the continental dike, leaving the other ports and provinces no choice but to follow.

In the circumstances, patriotic ardor tended everywhere to

³⁶ J. B. Hubbell, editor, "'On Liberty-Tree': a Revolutionary Poem from South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, xli (1940), 119-122.

³⁷ *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 28, 1770; *New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, Oct. 1.

³⁸ J. T. Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia, 1884), 1, 283-284; A. M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (New York, 1918), 220-227.

cool during the next few years. Massachusetts, which had instituted the original Liberty Tree, exhibited the most signs of unrest, but even Samuel Adams, the "Grand Incendiary of the Province," could find little fuel for a blaze.³⁹ At Roxbury, though, a band of "true friends of liberty" on August 14, 1773, the anniversary of the Stamp Act riots, adopted an elm as Liberty Tree.⁴⁰ This action had probably been prompted by a new act of Parliament, passed in May, granting the East India Company a virtual monopoly of the American tea market. This law unexpectedly revived all the earlier colonial fears of parliamentary absolutism.

Matters first came to a head in Boston. As the moment for the arrival of the tea ships approached, the patriots, reverting to their tactics in Stamp Act days, summoned the local agents of the Company to Liberty Tree to resign. The time was set for noon on November 3. That morning John Hancock's flag on the "sacred elm" alerted the citizens, the town crier helped spread the word, and the bells of the town rang throughout the preceding hour. But the five hundred persons from Boston and nearby towns who assembled to witness the "Tree Ordeal" went home disappointed, for the tea consignees, confident of Governor Hutchinson's unshakable support, did not show up.⁴¹ After other attempts at intimidation failed as badly, the populace on the night of December 16 staged the famous Tea Party: they dumped the obnoxious herb into the harbor.

Parliament's rejoinder to this action—the "Intolerable Acts," adopted the following spring—aroused all America to a sense of peril and in the autumn led to the convening at Philadelphia of the First Continental Congress. Though this final stage of the contest did not propagate new Liberty Trees, it greatly multiplied the Liberty Poles. On September 5, 1774,

³⁹ Hutchinson's characterization of Adams. W. V. Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams* (Boston, 1865), I, 488.

⁴⁰ *Massachusetts Spy*, Aug. 19, 1773.

⁴¹ Hutchinson, *Massachusetts Bay*, III, 423-424; Wells, *Samuel Adams*, II, 103-104; Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 45.

the opening day of the Continental Congress, the inhabitants of Shutesbury, Massachusetts, erected one "as a signal of resentment" to the "late oppressive acts."⁴² In the ensuing weeks and months Concord, Taunton, Middleborough, Barnstable, Granville, Vineyard Haven, and many other Bay Colony communities followed suit. The residents of Hanover, to dispel any doubt, nailed to their shaft the admonition: "This monument is erected in terrorem, not only to the Tories of the present, but of future generations. . . ."⁴³ In Plymouth the inhabitants, deciding to mount their Liberty Pole on their famous Rock, split the great boulder in the effort to remove it to the center of town and had to be content with using the broken fragment.⁴⁴

In some Massachusetts towns, however, it took more than a timber column or threatening inscriptions to quell the ill-disposed. Three miscreants in Sandwich, who destroyed the Liberty Pole one night, were forced publicly to confess that they had behaved "most Wickedly, Maliciously and Injuriously, (being instigated by the Devil and our own evil Hearts)," as well as to pay £5 damages. The citizens thereupon put up a "New and very beautiful" replacement and published an account of the affair in the Boston press as "*a warning to other Villains to avoid the like iniquitous Practices.*"⁴⁵ A similar offense a few days earlier at Bridgewater brought corresponding punishment along with a bigger and better Pole.⁴⁶

New Hampshire, hitherto immune to the contagion, now showed signs of succumbing when the residents of little Greenland introduced the patriot symbol on December 17, 1774. A resident, who was accused of having offered to "indemnify any one who would cut the Pole down," hastily issued a disclaimer.

⁴² *Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 15, 1774.

⁴³ *Massachusetts Spy*, Nov. 3, 1774.

⁴⁴ There it remained until it was put in Pilgrim Hall in 1835. James Thacher, *History of the Town of Plymouth* (Boston, 1835), 198-199. In 1880 it was returned to its original site.

⁴⁵ *Massachusetts Spy*, Nov. 10, 1774; *Boston Evening-Post*, Nov. 7.

⁴⁶ *Boston Evening-Post*, Oct. 3, 1774.

er to escape popular wrath.⁴⁷ Meanwhile the inhabitants of South Kingston on October 29 gave Rhode Island its third Liberty Pole by rearing an eighty-five-foot mast marked with the words: "LIBERTY IN OPPOSITION TO ARBITRARY TAXATION."⁴⁸

Next door in Connecticut, a thousand people at Farmington inaugurated a Pole on May 19, 1774, with the burning of an effigy of Governor Hutchinson and of a copy of the Boston Port Act.⁴⁹ In August, when the Massachusetts delegates to the Continental Congress stopped at New Haven en route to Philadelphia, they rejoiced at their warm reception only to learn afterward that the more moderate citizens had planned it "to divert the populace from erecting a liberty pole." A month later, however, New Haven had one.⁵⁰ By October the newspapers reported that "Liberty-poles, from 100 to 170 feet high, are erected and erecting in most of the towns of Connecticut."⁵¹ In New York province the device of patriot shafts was also a "common manoeuvre."⁵² In fact, a Liberty Pole was even put up in June, 1775, at Savannah, Georgia, a province hitherto laggard in patriotic zeal. There it was to figure prominently a year later in the exercises attending the reading of the Declaration of Independence.⁵³

Everywhere the Poles betokened the heightened spirit of colonial opposition. "Those days were the days of riots and mobs," a patriot poet recalled in after years:

Priests preaching up war for the good of our soules,
And libels, and lying, and Liberty poles,
From which, when some whimsical colours you waved,
We had nothing to do, but look up and be saved.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, Dec. 30, 1774, Jan. 6, 1775.

⁴⁸ *Newport Mercury*, Nov. 14, 1774.

⁴⁹ *Connecticut Courant*, May 24, 1774; *Massachusetts Spy*, June 2.

⁵⁰ Adams, *Works*, II, 342-344; Stiles, *Literary Diary*, II, 456 n.

⁵¹ *Newport Mercury*, Oct. 3, 1774; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie's), Oct. 27.

⁵² *New-York Journal*, April 6, 1775.

⁵³ C. C. Jones, *History of Georgia* (Boston, 1883), II, 176; Frank Moore, editor, *Diary of the American Revolution* (New York, 1860), I, 283-284.

⁵⁴ "Hugh Gaine's Life," Philip Freneau, *Poems* (F. L. Pattee, editor, Prince-

But, as in Massachusetts, what was food for the faithful was poison for the perverse. In New York city, for example, two Tories in March, 1775, were "used in a most cruel manner by a mob of above two hundred men" for refusing on bended knees to curse King George at the Liberty Pole.⁵⁵ And not untypical of actual happenings was the case of the Connecticut Squire M'Fingal in Trumbull's mock epic, who led an assault on a "May-pole of sedition" only to end up with a coat of tar and feathers and the crowning indignity of being stuck to the Pole.⁵⁶

Sometimes, as at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in February, 1775, the soberer elements felt it necessary to restrain the Liberty Pole enthusiasts.⁵⁷ In other instances the Tories themselves took such countermeasures as they dared. At Shawangunk in New York's Ulster County they raised a "royal Standard on a mast seventy five feet high" in February as a token of their own "unshaken loyalty and incorruptible fidelity."⁵⁸ At Poughkeepsie the next month the Dutchess County Tories, backed by the high sheriff and other officials, cut down the Liberty Pole as a "public nuisance." The protests of the man on whose land it stood were in vain.⁵⁹

The outbreak of hostilities in April, 1775, at Concord and Lexington released all the pent-up fury of the British adherents against the hated tokens of insurgency. Fittingly enough, Boston's Liberty Tree, progenitor of the numerous brood, fell the first prey, the beleaguered redcoats "with malice diabolical" hacking it down in August. Its dying words, according to a Tory version, were:

ton, 1902), II, 203; originally printed in *Freeman's Journal* (Philadelphia), Jan. 8, 1783, and following numbers.

⁵⁵ *New-York Gazetteer*, March 9, 1775, cited in Moore, *Diary*, I, 37.

⁵⁶ John Trumbull, *M'Fingal* (Boston, 1826), especially Canto Third.

⁵⁷ Moore, *Diary*, I, 23-24.

⁵⁸ *New-York Gazetteer*, March 2, 1775.

⁵⁹ *New-York Gazetteer*, April 13, 1775; *New-York Journal*, April 6.

If ever there should be a shoot,
 Spring from my venerable root,
 Prevent, oh heaven! it ne'er may see,
 Such savage times of liberty.⁶⁰

But the patriots properly observed that, though the unresisting symbol had been destroyed, the "Grand American Tree of Liberty" in a broader sense now spread its branches over the whole continent.⁶¹ When the foe abandoned the city in the spring of 1776, the Sons of Liberty waited until August 14, the anniversary of the Stamp Act riots, and then, with due pomp and circumstance, erected a Liberty Pole on the same spot.⁶²

In October, 1776, the British in New York city, after their many earlier failures to remove the Liberty Pole, finally did away with the "monument of insult to the Government."⁶³ In December, following their occupation of Newport, they wreaked their vengeance on that city's Liberty Tree, though the inhabitants replaced it in 1783 upon the coming of peace.⁶⁴ At Charleston, South Carolina, where the Declaration of Independence was officially proclaimed under Liberty Tree on August 5, 1776, the great oak stood guard until Sir Henry Clinton captured the town in May, 1780. From its stump there was carved many years later a cane head for President Jefferson.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ From a much longer "Soliloquy of the Boston Tree of Liberty," *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Weekly News-Letter*, Feb. 22, 1776.

⁶¹ *Boston-Gazette*, Sept. 4, 1775; *Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 6. According to local legend, three girls at Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard blew up the town's Liberty Pole a few years later rather than have it taken by the captain of a British warship to replace a spar. C. E. Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard* (Boston, 1911-1925), 1, 412-413.

⁶² *Boston-Gazette*, Aug. 19, 1776. The Pole survived until 1826, the semi-centennial of Independence, when a new one was put up.

⁶³ Governor William Tryon's characterization. "Liberty Pole on the Commons," New-York Historical Society, *Bulletin*, III, 126.

⁶⁴ Terry, "History of Liberty Tree of Newport," Newport Historical Society, *Bulletin*, no. 27, p. 15.

⁶⁵ Johnston, *Traditions and Reminiscences*, 35, 189-190.

V

Nothing had dramatized the popular opposition to centralized power so effectively as the Liberty Trees and Liberty Poles. Hence it is not surprising that these symbols outlived the occasion that gave them rise. As Jefferson said in 1787, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants."⁶⁶ Though Jefferson alluded to a metaphorical tree, the orator Thomas Dawes, Jr., referred to a genuine one at the Boston exercises for replacing the victim of the redcoats' rage with a Liberty Pole:

Of high renown here grew the tree,—
The elm so dear to liberty. . . .
This day, with filial awe, surround
Its root, that sanctifies the ground;
And, by your fathers' spirits, swear
The rights they left you'll not impair.⁶⁷

Moreover, the hallowed Tree acquired an international significance when the Jacobins in France, embarking on their revolution, made it one of their emblems. If this action was more than a coincidence, then it is probable that Tom Paine, who in 1775 had addressed a poetical eulogy to Liberty Tree while fomenting American resistance, introduced the practice when he was later in Paris stepping up French resistance.⁶⁸ In the United States the downfall of the monarchy occasioned widespread public celebrations, with New York, Philadelphia, and other cities erecting Liberty Poles after the newer American fashion. Samuel Adams, now lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, presided at the civic feast in Boston's Faneuil

⁶⁶ Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (A. E. Bergh, editor, Washington, 1905), vi, 373.

⁶⁷ J. S. Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators* (Boston, 1852), 142.

⁶⁸ Joel Barlow, a friend of Paine's who knew France in these times, says in his imaginative "Genealogy of the Tree of Liberty" that the usage originated in America. C. C. Brinton, *The Jacobins* (New York, 1930), 201, states, without denying the possibility of intermediate sources, that the Gallic symbol "may be distantly related to the maypole."

Hall on January 24, 1793. Liberty Caps, a Gallic innovation, generally topped the shafts or, as at the banquet for the new French minister Genêt in Philadelphia on February 1, formed the centerpiece of the decorations.⁶⁹ The United States government from 1793 to 1796 even minted a cent which displayed a Liberty Pole surmounted by the Cap.

Though the boiling enthusiasm presently subsided, the Whisky Rebellion soon furnished domestic reasons for a resort to Liberty Poles. The back-country farmers of Pennsylvania and bordering states considered the federal whisky tax of 1791 no less oppressive than the colonists had the Stamp Act. In 1794 they began to rally resistance throughout the disaffected region with Poles bearing such inscriptions as "Liberty and No Excise" and "Liberty or Death," and to the shafts they haled tax collectors and payers for summary punishment. Teague, the exuberant Irishman in Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry*, suffered a fate which, as the author knew from having been on the scene, was matched many times in real life. Tempted by vanity into becoming a revenue officer, he found himself instead a "wild fowl of the forest" with the help of tar and feathers.⁷⁰

As on the verge of the Revolutionary War, the friends of law and order made every effort to suppress the "anarchy poles," but even when they succeeded, the masts, as at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and Hagerstown, Maryland, magically reappeared almost at once.⁷¹ In Winchester, Virginia, the con-

⁶⁹ For the American response, see C. D. Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Baltimore, 1897), 164-168, 172-173, 218; J. B. McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States* (New York, 1883-1913), II, 104-106; Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 203, IV, 10-11. The Liberty Cap represented the Phrygian headpiece which a Roman slave received at his manumission.

⁷⁰ H. H. Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry* (C. M. Newlin, editor, New York, 1937), 300-308 (this part, first published in 1797). Interestingly enough, Brackenridge in 1800 helped establish in Pittsburgh a newspaper called *The Tree of Liberty*, which lasted till 1810.

⁷¹ This account rests upon McMaster, *History*, II, 197-198; and L. D. Baldwin, *Whiskey Rebels* (Pittsburgh, 1939), 179, 187, 192-193, 207-209.

servatives, eschewing force for counterpropaganda, put up two columns of their own with banners reading "For Liberty and the Laws of our Country." In the end, however, it took a militia army under federal command to frighten the insurgents into submission. Yet five years later the short-lived Fries Rebellion against another United States tax strewed eastern Pennsylvania with Liberty Poles which, a contemporary said, rose "in grand colonnade, from the banks of the Delaware to those of the Susquehanna."⁷² The Spirit of 1776 could not easily be quelled.

Indeed, the passage of the Sedition Act by the Federalist Congress in 1798 brought the Poles once more into nationwide prominence.⁷³ These "wooden gods of sedition," as the administration party called them in unconscious imitation of the once hated Tories, spoke out louder than words against the highhanded attempt to suppress minority criticism. Fearing that the Poles portended open revolt, the Federalists sought to strangle them at birth. At Wallingford, Vermont, at Vassalboro in present Maine, and in various communities of New York and New Jersey—Newburgh, Hackensack, Newark, Mendham and elsewhere—they denuded the shafts of the detested Liberty Caps or demolished them whole. In Pennsylvania, where the recent Whisky Rebellion still caused sleepless nights, associations "to destroy the sedition poles" went into action. At Dedham, Massachusetts, the Federalists, not content with removing the "rallying point of insurrection," prosecuted two of the ringleaders under the Sedition Act. Though one escaped with a nominal penalty, the other, who had compounded his misconduct by writing pamphlets against the dominant party, suffered a jail sentence of eighteen months

⁷² Alexander Graydon, *Memoirs of His Own Time* (J. S. Littell, editor, Philadelphia, 1846), 393. See also McMaster, *History*, II, 438, and W. W. H. Davis, *The Fries Rebellion* (Doylestown, 1899), 110, 140-141.

⁷³ This account follows Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 103-112; McMaster, *History*, II, 401-403; F. M. Anderson, "The Enforcement of the Alien and Sedition Laws," *American Historical Association, Annual Report for 1912*, 122-125.

and a \$480 fine—the heaviest penalty for any offender under the Sedition Act.

The opposition press did not fail to point out that, when the British authorities had destroyed Liberty Poles, they were “tyrants,” but that the American authorities, though doing the same, “were not tyrants” because “the Sedition Law forbids our calling them so.”⁷⁴ It is little wonder that in the presidential campaign of 1800 the followers of Jefferson succeeded in mustering sentiment against his Federalist rival with the help of Liberty Poles. How widespread this strategy was it would be difficult to say, but, in far-off Kentucky at least, a contemporary attested that they contributed to blowing the voters “into a Flame.”⁷⁵

Because the famous token was the recourse of prodemocratic minorities, the long tenure of the Jeffersonian Republicans—the party of popular rights—cast the Poles temporarily into disuse. Not till active political warfare revived in the late 1820's did they reappear and then in a new guise. With both parties now wooing the common man, the followers of Andrew Jackson (“Old Hickory”) proclaimed their faith with Hickory Poles, while the partisans of Henry Clay (of Ashland in Kentucky) signalized their loyalty with Ash Poles. A French sojourner at Powelton, near Philadelphia, during the 1834 Congressional campaign saw “gigantic hickory poles which made their solemn entry on eight wheels, for the purpose of being planted” by the Democrats. One of the beams, hauled by eight beribboned horses to the sound of fifes and drums, was preceded by a procession of Jacksonians wearing twigs of the “sacred tree” in their hats.⁷⁶

The practice of political shafts endured even after Jackson departed from the White House. In the early 1840's for exam-

⁷⁴ *Independent Chronicle* (Boston), Jan. 17, 1799, quoted in Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 112.

⁷⁵ Bernard Mayo, *Henry Clay, Spokesman of the New West* (Boston, 1937), 80-81.

⁷⁶ Michel Chevalier, *Society, Manners and Politics in the United States* (Boston, 1839), 317-318.

ple, the two political parties kindled electoral enthusiasm with ten or more such Poles in Rochester, New York, and during the 1844 campaign various communities in Michigan are recorded as setting up Hickory Poles.⁷⁷ Naturally the supporters of the new Republican party, when they put forward Frémont as their first presidential candidate in 1856, resorted to the familiar device. If the instance of Connecticut is typical, however, they returned to the original name of Liberty Pole perhaps as better befitting their crusade against the extension of slavery.⁷⁸ But, whatever the designation, the Poles had long since ceased being harbingers of terrorism and revolt. As the son of the author of *Modern Chivalry* put it shortly after the Frémont contest, "At the present, they are among the harmless means of giving vent to party differences. . . ."⁷⁹

But even as campaign symbols the Poles had now pretty much run their course. Already they were beginning to find a nonpartisan use as the focal point of Fourth of July celebrations. The Liberty Pole, erected for that purpose in 1846 in Rochester, New York, towered 118 feet above the ground and supported a banner twenty-five feet in length.⁸⁰ Similar flag-staffs known as Liberty Poles were to be found in scattered communities through the rest of the century.⁸¹ And so the long history of this potent American emblem came at last to a close.

⁷⁷ Blake McKelvey, "Old and New Landmarks and Historic Houses," *Rochester History*, xii (1850), nos. 2-3, p. 3; *Detroit Free Press*, Aug. 12, Oct. 18, 1844. For items concerning Hickory Poles in Michigan in the elections of 1860 and 1868, see *Detroit Free Press*, June 30, 1860, Sept. 22, 1868. Dr. Milo M. Quaife kindly supplied these newspaper references.

⁷⁸ *Hartford Daily Courant*, Aug. 5, 1856; J. E. Smith, *One Hundred Years of Hartford's Courant* (New Haven, 1949), 227.

⁷⁹ H. M. Brackenridge, *History of the Western Insurrection* (Pittsburgh, 1859), 128.

⁸⁰ It was replaced in 1860 with a new one which remained until it was blown over by a gale in 1889. McKelvey, "Old and New Landmarks and Historic Houses," *Rochester History*, xii, nos. 2-3, 3-4. The Pole at Biddeford, Maine, put up in 1856, survived until the 1870's when it was removed to prevent its falling. See *Biddeford Weekly Journal*, Aug. 7, 14, 1908, references for which I am indebted to Dr. Roy Fairfield of Bates College.

⁸¹ Quaife, *Flag of the United States*, 41 n., notes those in Iowa in the 1880's and 1890's.

Since 1765 the Tree of Liberty in its various incarnations had served many purposes. It was appropriate that in its final form it should commemorate the popular will to freedom which had first brought it into being.

THOMAS HOOKER

CLINTON ROSSITER

ONCE upon a time in Hartford, Connecticut, lived a wonderful man named Thomas Hooker. The undisputed facts of this man's life are so few that many accounts of him seem almost like fairy tales. No one knows what he looked like, yet two splendid statues of him gaze out sternly over the bustling of the insurance peddlers. No one knows where he rests in dust, but a gravestone proclaims his triumphs and talents.

Historians agree upon the leading act of his life, that he was "the chief instrument" in the founding of Connecticut, and upon the quality of his character, that he was "a person who while doing his master's work, would put a king in his pocket."¹ They do not agree, however, on the thoughts he entertained or the nature of the government he helped establish. One line pictures Hooker as the first American democrat, Connecticut as the first American democracy, and the Fundamental Orders of 1639 as "the first written constitution of modern democracy."² John Fiske and the loyal sons and daughters of Connecticut³ have been the most devoted of this school, but such respectable scholars as Parrington, J. T. Adams, and J. M. Jacobson are also charter members. Let Professor Johnston of Princeton speak for this group:

It is on the banks of the Connecticut, under the mighty preach-

¹ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford, 1820), I, 311, 313.

² G. P. Gooch, *Political Thought in England from Bacon to Halifax* (London, 1914), 142. For representative treatments of Hooker as democrat and Connecticut as democracy, see John Fiske, *The Beginnings of New England* (Boston, 1890), 123-128; W. D. Love, *The Colonial History of Hartford* (Hartford, 1914), chapter 5; V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York, 1930), I, 53-62; J. T. Adams, *The Founding of New England* (Boston, 1921), 192-195; J. M. Jacobson, *The Development of American Political Thought* (New York, 1932), 17. And see J. M. Taylor, *Roger Ludlow* (New York, 1900), 82-86, for a crushing array of eulogies of the Fundamental Orders as "the first example in history of a written constitution," including contributions by Bancroft, Palfrey, J. R. Green, Bryce, and Bushnell.

³ See Mrs. J. M. Holcombe, "The Birthplace of American Democracy," *Connecticut Magazine*, VIII (1904), 489-504; L. E. Whiton, "Aristocracy versus Democracy," *Connecticut Magazine*, IX (1905), 33-48.

ing of Thomas Hooker and in the constitution to which he gave life, if not form, that we draw the first breath of that atmosphere which is now so familiar to us. The birthplace of American democracy is Hartford.⁴

Other historians have challenged these high-flown claims. The most outspoken has been Perry Miller, who insists that the representation of Hooker as democrat "rests upon a misreading of two or three of his utterances" and asserts that Hooker's "religious and political opinions were thoroughly orthodox."⁵ As for Connecticut, Charles M. Andrews pictured it as "a Puritan state, of the same flesh and blood as Massachusetts, and in her beginnings (representing) even better than her neighbor the Puritan ideal of a Heavenly City of God."⁶

The truth lies somewhere between these two extremes, neither of which does full justice to Hooker and Connecticut, nor expresses their significance for the history of democracy in colonial America. Hooker was certainly no democrat in our sense of the word, nor can we look upon Connecticut as a genuine democracy. On the other hand, he was not quite so orthodox as Professor Miller would have us believe, and it is exactly here that his life and philosophy thrust themselves upon the student of American thought. If he stood fast in orthodoxy, he faced towards freedom and even took several steps into the democratic future. It is for this reason—that he represents the forces of liberty inherent in Puritanism more dramatically than any other colonial of the seventeenth century—that Hooker's life affords "a pattern well worthy of perpetual consideration."⁷ Let us once again summon "the famous servant of Christ, grave godly and judicious Hooker," that he may testify to the virtues of New England Puritanism.

⁴ Alexander Johnston, *Connecticut* (Boston, 1893), 73.

⁵ P. Miller and T. H. Johnson, editors, *The Puritans* (New York, 1938), 291. See particularly Professor Miller's briskly argued "Thomas Hooker and the Democracy of Early Connecticut," *NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*, IV (1931), 663-712.

⁶ C. M. Andrews, "On Some Early Aspects of Connecticut History," *NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*, XVII (1944), 3.

⁷ Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 302.

*Come, Hooker, come forth of thy native soile.*⁸

I

Thomas Hooker, noblest of the New England Puritans, was born in 1586 in the hamlet of Marfield, Leicestershire, England.⁹ The few faint facts that we know of his parentage point convincingly to an origin in yeoman stock.¹⁰ Although Mather tells us that his mother and father "were neither unable, nor unwilling to bestow upon him a liberal education,"¹¹ their chief service was to stand out of the way of a gifted child intent from an early age upon rising above his ancestral surroundings. Hooker achieved his education through scholarships and self-help, first at the grammar school in Market Bosworth where Samuel Johnson was later to serve as an unhappy usher, then at Cambridge where he made his way by waiting on his fellow students at table.

Having taken his B.A. in 1608 and M.A. in 1611, Hooker lingered on for a number of years at Cambridge as catechist and lecturer. This was the critical period of his life. He underwent a religious experience of soul-shattering intensity and body-racking duration, and he began a regimen of meditation and rhetoric that was to earn him a reputation as one of the most learned and powerful preachers of old and New England.

The record of Hooker's English ministry was one of huge popular and scant ecclesiastical success. He was first, from about 1620 to 1625, minister of a tiny country parish in Esher,

⁸ J. F. Jameson, editor, *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence* (New York, 1910), 87, 90.

⁹ The standard biography of Hooker is G. L. Walker, *Thomas Hooker, Preacher, Founder, Democrat* (New York, 1891). See also E. W. Hooker, *The Life of Thomas Hooker* (Boston, 1849); W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit* (New York, 1857), I, 30-37; W. S. Archibald, *Thomas Hooker* (New Haven, 1933), *Connecticut Tercentenary Pamphlets*, No. 4. These works are sketchy and do little more than repeat the facts presented by Mather in the *Magnalia* and Winthrop in his *Journal*.

¹⁰ For evidence of the confusion surrounding the most elementary facts of Hooker's life, see *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, XLVII (1893), 189-192; *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, LXIV (1933), 2; J. Savage, ed., *Genealogical Dictionary* (Boston, 1860), II, 459-460.

¹¹ *Magnalia*, I, 303.

Surrey, then, from 1625 to 1629, lecturer in St. Mary's Church at Chelmsford in Essex. His learning and eloquence, his talent for the kind of preaching that silences hecklers and torments doubters, made him one of the most conspicuous nonconformists in all England. By the time that William Laud removed to the See of London in July, 1628, Hooker was marked for early suppression. The lecturers, "the people's creatures," who "blew the bellows of their sedition," were now to be brought to orthodox heel. The most famous of the lecturers in Laud's own diocese was one of the first to feel the heavy hand of that truculent bishop who had so much to do with the settling of America. In late 1629 Hooker was forced to retire from his position at Chelmsford, and a few months later, having unsuccessfully sought refuge from Laud as a schoolmaster at Little Baddow, he fled to Holland and the fellowship of many other dissenting exiles.

His attention had already been called to America. We have proof, in letters to John Winthrop,¹² that Hooker was wanted badly for the Massachusetts experiment and was being importuned as early as 1628 or 1629 to join the emigrants. In 1632 a band of people left Essex for America and settled near Boston under the expectant label of "Mr. Hooker's company."¹³ Finally, in July, 1633, having returned to England and narrowly escaped capture by the king's officers, Hooker sailed for America on the *Griffin*, in company with John Cotton, John Haynes, and his own *fidus Achates*, Samuel Stone, who was to serve at his side until the master's death and then succeed him in the pastorate of the church at Hartford. Hooker and Cotton were fugitives from religious persecution in the most obvious sense, for "they gat out of England with much difficulty."¹⁴ In Winthrop's *Journal* there is this entry for October 11, 1633: "A fast at Newtown, where Mr. Hooker was chosen pastor, and Mr. Stone teacher, in such a manner as be-

¹² *Winthrop Papers* (Boston, 1929), 1, 178, 336.

¹³ J. K. Hosmer, editor, *Winthrop's Journal* (New York, 1908), 1, 90.

¹⁴ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1, 106.

fore at Boston."¹⁵ Thus was solemnly founded what is today the First Church of Christ in Hartford, and thus did "noble Hooker" mount to the pulpit in which he at last, through his fourteen remaining years, found the peace and service he had always sought in vain.

The ordinations of Hooker and of Cotton "before at Boston" were an event of great moment for the course of New England's ecclesiastical and political history. Neither of these great Puritans had been a separatist in England, yet each, when he finally took up the leadership of his American congregation, was ordained by his flock in a manner that was separatist, primitive, and essentially democratic. What the humble folk of the Scrooby-Leyden-Plymouth congregation had done out of conviction in 1620, the proud elders of Boston and Newtown, and of the eight or nine other churches in the Bay colony, did out of necessity between 1629 and 1633: They built their new churches on the plain congregational principle of the competency of each body of believers to form its own church-estate and to choose and ordain its own officers. This had been done at Salem in 1629, to the dismay of many Puritans still in England, and it was done repeatedly in the founding of the other wilderness churches. In the very act of crossing the wide Atlantic, these non-separatist Puritans had become separatist congregationalists; for, however vigorous their protests against the brand of "Brownism," we can read in Winthrop's own words what took place "before at Boston":¹⁶ an act of pure, though yet unacknowledged congregationalism. Thus at the very outset of his ministry in America did Hooker find himself the pastor of a covenanted church, one that was separate from the Church of England, and indeed from all other churches in the world, in everything but the inconsistent theories of a few of its members.

¹⁵ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1, 111.

¹⁶ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1, 110-111. On the purported influence of Plymouth, see the evidence (a letter of Charles Gott to Governor Bradford, July 30, 1629) in *Bradford's History* (Boston, 1899), 316-317. For Perry Miller's dissenting view, see his *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 1933), 127-147.

II

In May, 1634, there resounded through the tiny colony the first noticeable rumble of collective discontent. The point of origin was Newtown on the Charles, where Hooker had been installed only seven months before. The method of expression was a petition of the inhabitants complaining of "straitness for want of land" and asking "leave of the court to look out for enlargement or removal."¹⁷ After a scouting party had explored the Agawam and Merrimac regions with the General Court's permission and had failed to discover what the Newtown congregation was seeking, another party explored Connecticut without permission and discovered it in abundance: rich meadowlands at a comfortable distance from Massachusetts. The next step in the founding of Connecticut is most honestly related in Winthrop's spare and hardy style:

September 4 (1634). The general court began at Newtown, and continued a week, and then was adjourned fourteen days. Many things were there agitated and concluded. . . . But the main business, which spent the most time, and caused the adjourning of the court, was about the removal of Newtown. They had leave, the last general court, to look out some place for enlargement or removal, . . . and now they moved, that they might have leave to remove to Connecticut. This matter was debated divers days, and many reasons alleged pro and con. The principal reasons for their removal were, 1. Their want of accomodation for their cattle, so as they were not able to maintain their ministers, nor could receive any more of their friends to help them; and here it was alleged by Mr. Hooker, as a fundamental error, that towns were set so near each to other.

2. The fruitfulness and commodiousness of Connecticut, and the danger of having it possessed by others, Dutch or English.
3. The strong bent of their spirits to remove thither.

Against these it was said, 1. That, in point of conscience, they ought not to depart from us, being knit to us in one body, and bound by oath to seek the welfare of this commonwealth.

2. That, in point of state and civil policy, we ought not to give

¹⁷ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1, 124.

them leave to depart. 1. Being we were now weak and in danger to be assailed. 2. The departure of Mr. Hooker would not only draw many from us, but also divert other friends that would come to us. . . .

Upon these and other arguments the court being divided, it was put to vote; and, of the deputies, fifteen were for their departure, and ten against it. The governor and two assistants were for it, and the deputy and all the rest of the assistants were against it, (except the secretary, who gave no vote;) whereupon no record was entered, because there were not six assistants in the vote, as the patent requires. Upon this grew a great difference between the governor and assistants, and the deputies. They would not yield the assistants a negative voice, and the others (considering how dangerous it might be to the commonwealth, if they should not keep that strength to balance the greater number of the deputies) thought it safe to stand upon it. So, when they could proceed no farther, the whole court agreed to keep a day of humiliation to seek the Lord, which accordingly was done, in all the congregations, the 18th day of this month; and the 24th the court met again. Before they began, Mr. Cotton preached, (being desired by all the court, upon Mr. Hooker's instant excuse of his unfitness for that occasion). . . . And it pleased the Lord so to assist him, and to bless his own ordinance, that the affairs of the court went on cheerfully; and although all were not satisfied about the negative voice to be left to the magistrates, yet no man moved aught about it, and the congregation of Newtown came and accepted of such enlargement as had formerly been offered them by Boston and Watertown; and so the fear of their removal to Connecticut was removed.¹⁸

This memorable passage from the most priceless original narrative of American history reminds us how influential a position this self-effacing minister occupied. Certainly the only man who could have challenged his superiority in the qualities and gifts by which the world judges its preachers was John Cotton, and not until well after Hooker's departure did the Boston teacher make secure his ascendancy in the Bay area. Until then it was Hooker before all other ministers who was sought out for advice and support, especially in the numerous

¹⁸ *Winthrop's Journal*, I, 132-134.

squabbles that seem to have made up at least half the early history of the colony.¹⁹ And even after the removal he was several times importuned, not always successfully, to return to Massachusetts to provide guidance for those less resolute than he. "He seems to have been regarded as the common property of the churches in all the New England colonies."²⁰ The roster of preachers upon whom Hooker had a decided, often decisive influence is an honor roll of New England Puritanism: John Cotton, John Davenport, Thomas Shepard (his son-in-law), John Norton, Samuel Stone, John Eliot (his assistant in Little Baddow), Nathaniel Rogers, John and Francis Higginson, Richard Mather, and many others.

We can only speculate as to the reasons for the removal to Connecticut of the Newtown congregation. The first two arguments put forward by the petitioners seem substantial enough. The promise of plentiful and fertile land was to beckon Americans westward for generations to come. But this does nothing to explain why these particular congregations should have been the first to move out, since they were certainly no more straitened "for want of land" than several others in the Bay. The evidence, which has been examined and reexamined by generations of historians, sifts down in the final winnowing to two main conjectures: (1) that there were personal rivalries between Haynes and Winthrop, and between Hooker and Cotton, carried on more or less politely but steadily building up to a major feud; and (2) that the people of these restless congregations, paced in this as in so many other affairs by their beloved Hooker, were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the oligarchic tendencies of the ruling element in the Bay colony. We have the testimony of William Hubbard that "after Mr. Hooker's coming over, it was observed that many of the freemen grew to be very jealous of their liberties."²¹

¹⁹ For evidence of Hooker's wise counsel, see *Winthrop's Journal*, I, 113-114, 142, 162-163.

²⁰ Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, I, 34.

²¹ The evidence on these points is reviewed by Walker, *Thomas Hooker*, 86.

In either case—whether the emphasis be placed on the economic motive of land hunger or the more complex human motives of personal jealousies and of impatience with an oppressive religious and political order²²—the founding of Connecticut was an event of profound historical import, both as fact and symbol. Factually, a new colony established itself one farther step removed from English oversight, a colony in which the fermenting process of colonial self-government was to take place with the least possible interference. Symbolically, the removal of “Mr. Hooker’s company” was the first overt indication of the popular urges that ran deep and strong beneath the apparently integral autocracy of New England Puritanism, as well as the first of the westward migrations within America itself. For those who interpret the rise of American democracy in terms of never-ceasing pressure on the frontier, the bold exodus of these few hundred families is an epic of American history. “Westward the course of empire takes its way.”

The westward course of these first pioneers was not exactly imperial in sweep. Temporarily restrained by the cajoling of the General Court and the grant of additional lands, the men of Newtown—and soon of Dorchester, Watertown, and Roxbury as well—would not be still. Through the summer of 1635 little bands of impatient inhabitants of these towns, some with permission from the Court and some without, moved westward to the Connecticut. And finally, in late May, 1636, with the Court’s permission, and indeed under its commission,²³

90; Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History*, II, 84-91; and Miller, “Thomas Hooker and the Democracy of Early Connecticut,” 675-679. William Hubbard’s *General History of New England* (c. 1680), printed in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, v-vi (1815), is the original authority upon which later historians have relied in this matter. At page 173 he makes the oft-quoted statement, “Two such eminent stars, such as were Mr. Cotton and Mr. Hooker, both of the first magnitude, though of differing influence, could not well continue in one and the same orb.”

²² For the testimony of Roger Williams on this point, see *Narragansett Club Publications*, VI, 344. For evidence of religious differences between Hooker and the Bay ministers, see *Winthrop Papers*, III, 199-200, 289-290; and his own account of the famous controversy over the cross in the ensign, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, XLII, 272-280.

²³ *Massachusetts Colonial Records*, I, 170-171.

Mr. Hooker, pastor of the church of Newtown, and the most of his congregation, went to Connecticut. His wife was carried in a horse litter; and they drove one hundred and sixty cattle, and fed of their milk by the way.²⁴

Thus were founded the river towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield, and with them the colony of Connecticut. Within a year almost eight hundred people were settled in the new Zion.

III

Granted that Hooker was no democrat, Connecticut no democracy, and the Fundamental Orders no constitution in the modern sense of these words,²⁵ the fact remains that the Connecticut experiment was dissimilar enough from the Massachusetts oligarchy to constitute a decisive step in the direction of free society and popular government. Before we can probe Hooker's political ideas, we must examine the government to which he gave his full support and blessing.

The first government of Connecticut, which preceded the arrival of the main body under Hooker, was simply that rudimentary pattern of "government by the acknowledged elders" that was to guide hundreds of other frontier settlements. The extent of formal government was a constable appointed and sworn by the General Court of Massachusetts for the protection of the settlers.²⁶ On March 3, 1636, the Court issued a commission bestowing broad powers of government for one year on eight selected members of the emigrating congregations; it included a provision for convening the "inhabitants of the towns" into a general assembly "to procede in executing the power and authority" granted to the commissioners.²⁷ Regular government may be said to have begun in April, 1636, two months before Hooker's coming, with the gathering of five of the commissioners in Connecticut to swear in constables

²⁴ *Winthrop's Journal*, 1, 180-181.

²⁵ On this third point, see the judgment of A. C. McLaughlin, *The Foundations of American Constitutionalism* (New York, 1932), 29.

²⁶ *Massachusetts Colonial Records*, 1, 159, 160.

²⁷ *Massachusetts Colonial Records*, 1, 170-171.

and pass a few orders. The first General Court met at Hartford in 1637 and resolved almost quixotically "that there shaibe an offensive warr agt the Pequoitt";²⁸ and finally, in 1638, with "the Pequoitt" thoroughly butchered and their threat to the colony permanently erased, the settlers turned to the business of erecting their own permanent pattern of self-government.

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut were adopted by the General Court January 14, 1639. The chief architects of this celebrated document were probably John Haynes, the leading member of Hooker's congregation, Roger Ludlow, the keenest legal mind in New England, and Hooker himself, who with his sermons and wise counsel pointed out the path for the others to travel. We can only guess at the mechanics of its formation and adoption, for there is a complete gap in the public records of the colony from April 5, 1638, to April 11, 1639. The weight of evidence points to the establishment of a small committee by the General Court, then a series of informal consultations to which Hooker was called, and finally the writing of a draft by Roger Ludlow. The form of government set in motion was simply an extension of the informal government of the first two years of the colony. In most but not all important respects the Fundamental Orders were a faithful model of the charter government that had been left behind in Massachusetts Bay.²⁹

The preamble is in essence a civil compact in which "we the Inhabitants and Residents" of the three towns did "assoiate and conioyne our selues to be as one Publike State or Commonwealth." The purposes of the government were two: "to mayntayne and presearue the liberty and purity of the gospell of our Lord Jesus"; and "to order and dispose of the affayres of the people," for which "an orderly and decent Gouerment" was declared to be necessary.

²⁸ *Connecticut Colonial Records*, 1, 9.

²⁹ The text of the Fundamental Orders is available in many works, e.g., *Connecticut Colonial Records*, 1, 20-25; G. M. Dutcher and A. C. Bates, *The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut* (New Haven, 1934), *Connecticut Tercentenary Pamphlets*, no. 20; H. S. Commager, editor, *Documents of American History* (New York, 1945), 22-24.

The eleven short articles then describe in barest detail (a notable characteristic of early American constitution-making) the manner of government that these good Englishmen found orderly and decent. The central element was the General Court, which was to meet twice a year (in April primarily for elections, in September for legislation and general business), and was to consist of the governor (as moderator, with only a tie-breaking vote), six assistants (or "Magestrats"), and four deputies from each town. The governor, who had to be a church member and a former magistrate, was to be elected yearly by the "admitted freemen" of the colony and could not succeed himself. The magistrates were also elected yearly by the freemen. The deputies, who had to be freemen themselves, were the choice of the "admitted Inhabitants in the seuerall Townes."

In the General Court was lodged "the supreme power of the Commonwealth." It could make and repeal laws (including the provisions in the Fundamental Orders), levy rates, dispose of lands, appoint and remove the "publike Officers" necessary to execute the laws, and in general "deale in any other matter that concerns the good of this commonwelth." Neither governor nor magistrates had a "negative voice," nor could the court be adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved except by its own vote. Specific provision was made for the court to convene itself, should the governor and magistrates neglect or refuse to call it. Finally, it was for the court to decide which inhabitants were to be admitted as freemen and thus made first-class citizens.

It should be clear that the primitive form of government ordained in the Fundamental Orders of 1639 was in no sense a democracy, constitutional or otherwise. The generations of patriotic historians and provincial orators who have insisted that Hooker and his companions did establish the first American democracy have distorted the minds and purposes of these excellent men. More than that, they have robbed them of their proper position in the long process through which American

democracy finally came to fruition. The cardinal point about democracy in the colonies, which bears endless repeating every time a historical society meets to hallow the great men of old, is this: Democracy was never established in colonial America, except perhaps in the Rhode Island of Roger Williams; democracy, wherever and to whatever extent it existed before 1776, evolved. Herein lies the true significance of the Connecticut adventure of Hooker, Haynes, Stone, and Ludlow—the fact, less spectacular but far more meaningful than the fancies of Fiske and Johnston, that they built a plainly marked way station on the road from seventeenth-century England to nineteenth-century America.

In short, the Fundamental Orders are to be remembered and studied exactly because they were not democratic, but rather half-aristocratic, half-popular—a curious and thoroughly English amalgam of Puritan authoritarianism, congregational liberalism, corporate flexibility, incipient Whiggery, and Connecticut experimental popularism. In most particulars, the government of the new colony was like that of Massachusetts,³⁰ but at least four major or minor arrangements were designedly more liberal than those that had been imposed on Massachusetts. First, no religious qualification for the suffrage was fixed upon freemen or inhabitants.³¹ Second, definite restrictions were placed upon the authority of the magistracy—for example, the provision for convening the General Court with or without gubernatorial and magisterial approval, and the provision permitting the deputies to meet before the regular court “to advise and consult of all such things as may concerne the good of the publike” and to judge the validity of their own elections. Third, the “inhabitants,” if not possessed of full political rights, were nevertheless to enjoy a legal right to elect deputies to the court. Fourth, the governor was sharply limited in power and forbidden to seek immediate

³⁰ An excellent comparison of these two governments is drawn by Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*, I, 309-311.

³¹ On the character and extent of the franchise in early Connecticut, see Andrews, *The Beginnings of Connecticut*, 42-44.

reflection. Finally, not even a passing reference to any outside authority is found in the Fundamental Orders. Massachusetts was ignored; more important, so was Charles I. The establishment of government in Connecticut was a clean-cut instance of free political association.

In practice as in fundamental law the early government of Connecticut was more popular than that of Massachusetts. The absence of a religious test for the right to participate in political affairs, the moderate conduct of the magistrates, and the clear reluctance of the clergy to push too far into the civil domain—these were indications of a more liberal, less controversial manner of conducting public business than the ways of the oligarchy in Massachusetts. The steps forward—such as the order of October, 1639,³² setting up a committee to codify and publish the laws and that of April, 1646, requesting Ludlow to draw up a complete “body of Lawes”³³—and the steps to the rear—such as the order of February, 1644, giving the magistrates a “negative voate” over the legislative activities of the General Court³⁴—were taken with a minimum of civil commotion. The population of Connecticut was more homogeneous, to be sure, and thus more easily governed than the troublemakers of Massachusetts. Yet the fact remains that the beginnings of Connecticut’s legendary “steady habits” date from a period when the stewardship of the Puritan élite was moderately and conscientiously discharged and the plain people given far more voice than they had ever enjoyed in Massachusetts or England.

Here, then, is evidence that Connecticut under Hooker, if not a democracy pure and simple, was a distinctly less autocratic civil society than Massachusetts. The spirit of political liberalism was lighted in America in the first years of the wilderness settlements, in but one or two places more brightly than in early Connecticut. And in a very real sense this early

³² *Connecticut Colonial Records*, 1, 36, 39.

³³ *Connecticut Colonial Records*, 1, 138. Ludlow’s Code of 1650 is printed at pages 509-563.

³⁴ *Connecticut Colonial Records*, 1, 119.

experience was a reflection of the popular leanings of the great New England Puritan, Thomas Hooker.

IV

We turn now from the primitive self-government of the first of the western settlements to the political ideas of the preacher who contributed so abundantly to its success. In approaching "incomparable Hooker," we must again take note that here was no hot rebel against the New England way, no Williams or Hutchinson or Child or Morton. Rather, he was a man of commanding influence within the Puritan system, a man of whom Cotton Mather could write, "I shall now invite my reader to behold at once the *wonders of New England*, and it is [in] one *Thomas Hooker* that he shall behold them."³⁵ Hooker was the matchless representative of the virtues of early New England—a man whose noble life refutes the easy assumption that Endicott and Norton were the authentic Puritans and proves that within Puritanism itself were the seeds of political liberty.

The attempt to revive Hooker as a seventeenth-century Jefferson has led to much confusion about his ecclesiastical views. Just as J. T. Adams strained the facts to set him up as the political antithesis of Winthrop,³⁶ so Parrington ignored them to set him up as the ecclesiastical antithesis of Davenport and Cotton.³⁷ Nothing could be further from the truth. Hooker was orthodox to the marrow of his rugged old bones.³⁸ The time-worn diaries and histories that defended the New England Way, and the tracts from old England that assaulted it, are choked with thousands of references to Thomas Hooker. They make plain the conviction of friend and foe that here

³⁵ *Magnalia*, I, 302-303.

³⁶ *The Founding of New England*, 193, 258.

³⁷ *Main Currents in American Thought*, I, 54, 57, 60.

³⁸ The antidote for an overdose of Parrington is a "shot" of Perry Miller, especially his *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* and *The New England Mind* (New York, 1939). The indices of these two books are a gold mine for diggers into Hooker's religious ideas, and I gratefully acknowledge that I have dug with huge profit.

indeed was the great man of the western churches. None but an orthodox minister would have been called on to lead the face-to-face scrimmage with Roger Williams and "Mistris Hutchison," to preside over the early synods, and especially to compose New England's *Reproof Valiant* to the "many books coming out of England . . . against the congregational way."³⁹ Hooker was at least as proper a Puritan as Cotton and Winthrop.

That Hooker was a Puritan of the Puritans is simply another way of saying that we must stretch the point to the limit to speak of him as a political thinker. His references to matters political and social were few and scattered. A feeling of piety flooded his heart and mind so completely that he rarely if ever contemplated man or society except as instruments of God's great plan. His prime, almost exclusive, intellectual concern was with ecclesiastical organization and religious doctrine,⁴⁰ and the observations he registered concerning the type of political institution best suited to man's earthly needs were instinctive projections of his thoughts about the structure of the true church. We must remember that the only society that made sense to Hooker was one in which church and state were not merely united but one.

It is therefore imperative to note that Hooker, though he stood like the Charter Oak itself on the same stern ecclesiastical ground as Cotton and Davenport, faced in a somewhat different direction. The discrepancy between Hooker's orthodoxy and Cotton's was primarily one of emphasis. Hooker's *Summe of Church-Discipline* and Cotton's *Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared* appeared as peas in the Puritan pod to the detractors and defenders of the New England churches. But it was in these varieties of emphasis that the popular tendencies in New England Puritanism received their

³⁹ *Winthrop's Journal*, I, 162-163, 229, 232; II, 139, 257.

⁴⁰ Hooker's religion is most perfectly represented in *The Poore Doubting Christian* (London, 1629); *The Application of Redemption* (London, 1657); *The Soules Preparation* (London, 1632); *The Soules Humiliation* (London, 1637); *The Soules Implantation* (London, 1637); and *The Soules Exaltation* (London, 1638).

initial impetus. Hooker's differences with Cotton were differences of degree, but more often than not these become in time differences of kind. In placing a little more emphasis on the covenant of man to man rather than on that of man to God, on the congregation than on the elders, on the "right hand of fellowship" than on the discipline of the synod,⁴¹ on the reason in man than on his sinfulness, on practice than on doctrine, on evangelism than on speculation, on the New Testament than on the Old,⁴² Hooker was prying open the door that later generations of New England churchgoers were to swing wide for liberty.

The sum of Hooker's political ideas is found in four separate and dissimilar sources: (1) the Fundamental Orders of 1639, which Ludlow drafted but Hooker inspired, and which certainly contained nothing contrary to his basic philosophy; (2) *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline* (London, 1648), an impressive defense of New England congregationalism; (3) the "angry letter"⁴³ to John Winthrop, written probably in November, 1638, in which Hooker's political disagreements with the Massachusetts leaders are most positively asserted; and (4) the sermon of May 31, 1638, to the Connecticut General Court, preserved in the form of a listener's notes.

Hooker wrote *The Summe of Church-Discipline* much against his will and only at the urgent request of his fellow ministers. It was in substance a reply to that excellent Scottish churchman, Samuel Rutherford, whose massive tome *The Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644) had been the most bone-rattling salvo fired by the Presbyterians in their unceasing barrage against the New England churches. Hooker's manuscript, along with another by Davenport, was dispatched to England in early 1646 on a ship that disappeared into the Atlantic

⁴¹ Hooker's strictly congregational views on the purposes and powers of synods are made plain in the fragmentary part 4 of *The Summe of Church-Discipline*, especially at pages 19, 23-25, 45-54. See also part 2, pages 79-80.

⁴² On this point, see the interesting observations of Archibald, *Thomas Hooker*, 15.

⁴³ Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*, 794.

wastes never to be seen again, except by certain sack-consuming citizens of New Haven on a hot and thundery June evening several years later.⁴⁴ When Hooker had become convinced of the loss of his manuscript, he turned reluctantly to producing a substitute. *The Summe* was unfinished at his death and was sent to the London printer by other hands. Even in this form it was to endure as "the supreme exposition of the Congregational church polity."⁴⁵ Although it treats specifically of ecclesiastical organization, Hooker several times makes clear that his ideas of the nature of the covenant, the power of the elders, and the place of the people are equally applicable to civil society. Here and there in its thorny thickets are observations on "law, nature, and reason" of enormous importance for an understanding of this Puritan's philosophy. The search is wearying but altogether rewarding.⁴⁶

The immediate occasion of the letter to Winthrop was a falling-out between Massachusetts, proud of her status as the most important New England colony, and Connecticut, jealous of her newly won independence, over the plan of confederation put forward by Winthrop and the Massachusetts magistrates in 1638. Winthrop worried the chief bone of contention in the pages of his *Journal*, belaboring Connecticut for refusing to trust their commissioners to the confederacy with "absolute power" to make important decisions, for asserting that the people at home should be constantly informed and requested for advice, and (here Winthrop makes a rare show of petulance) for choosing "divers scores men, who had no learning nor judgment."⁴⁷ This brought to the surface the differences in opinion between Hooker and Winthrop over the relative importance of people and magistrates in the con-

⁴⁴ *Winthrop's Journal*, II, 346; Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 77.

⁴⁵ Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*, 291.

⁴⁶ The London, 1648, edition of this book was the only one ever printed. The preface is reprinted in full in *Old South Leaflets* (Boston, n.d.), no. 55, in part in Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York, 1893), 132-148. Rutherford's answer was *A Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church-Discipline* (London, 1658).

⁴⁷ *Winthrop's Journal*, I, 231-232, 287-289.

duct of civil affairs. In the exchange of letters over this matter each of these worthy men seized the opportunity to express his basic philosophy. What we have left of this historic debate is Winthrop's summary of an opening letter to Hooker, the full text of Hooker's reply, and a rough draft of Winthrop's conciliatory answer.⁴⁸

Had Hooker thought more consciously in a political vein, he might well have written out for publication the Sermon to the General Court of May, 1638. The few precious scraps of information that we possess of this memorable election sermon have come down to us in the form of ciphered notes in the manuscript notebook of Henry Wolcott, Jr., of Windsor. This treasure was discovered in the nineteenth century and was deciphered by the noted Hartford antiquarian, J. Hammond Trumbull. Wolcott's outline of Hooker's sermon reads thus:

BY MR. HOOKER, AT HARTFORD, MAY 31, 1638

Text: Deut. i: 13. "Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." Captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds—over fifties—over tens, &c.

Doctrine. I. That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people, by God's own allowance.

II. The privilege of election, which belongs to the people, therefore must not be exercised according to their humours, but according to the blessed will and law of God.

III. They who have power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them.

Reasons. 1. Because the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people.

2. Because, by a free choice, the hearts of the people will be more inclined to the love of the persons [chosen] and more ready to yield [obedience.]

3. Because, of that duty and engagement of the people.

⁴⁸ *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 53-54, 75-84, 99-100. Hooker's letter may also be found in *Connecticut Historical Society Collections*, 1, 1-18.

Uses. The lesson taught is threefold:—

1st. There is matter of thankful acknowledgment, in the [appreciation] of God's faithfulness toward us, and the permission of these measures that God doth command and vouchsafe.

2dly. Of reproof—to dash the conceits of all those that shall oppose it.

3dly. Of exhortation—to persuade us, as God hath given us liberty, to *take* it.

And lastly—as God hath spared our lives, and given us them in liberty, so to seek the guidance of God, and to choose *in* God and *for* God.⁴⁹

It was this election sermon, surely one of the most influential ever preached in New England, that set the stage for the adoption of the Fundamental Orders.

There is little to be said of the sources of Hooker's thought, which were almost exclusively theological in nature. Like other leading exponents of early New England Congregationalism, he had gone to school with Augustine, Calvin, Beza, and Ames, and especially with the continental logician, Petrus Ramus.⁵⁰ He was apparently untouched by the winds of political doctrine. What little politics he expressed was transcribed ecclesiasticism. Charles M. Andrews once implied that Roger Williams might have had a good deal of influence on Hooker during the latter's visit to Providence in 1637, and confessed himself "tempted to believe" that some of the ideas later to be expounded by Williams in *The Bloody Tenent* found their way into the election sermon.⁵¹ The notion that Hooker might have been loosened up politically by the Rhode Island subversive is tempting indeed, but must remain in the realm of pleasant speculation.

⁴⁹ *Connecticut Historical Society Collections*, 1, 20-21. The bracketed words are those of whose identity Trumbull was not certain.

⁵⁰ See Miller, *The New England Mind*, especially 116-153, 312-330, 493-501, for the trail-blazing treatment of his influence on the theologians of early New England. I quite agree with Professor Miller's statement (439) that "Hooker's *Survey* . . . is today unreadable to one not at home in Ramus' *Dialecticae*."

⁵¹ Andrews, *The Beginnings of Connecticut*, 21.

V

The core of Hooker's political theory was the core of all speculation about the structure of church and state in Puritan New England: the concept of the covenant. He could no more have escaped from the grasp of this famous doctrine than he could have from a belief in hell-fire and damnation. Yet there were several notable differences between Hooker's version of the covenant and that of Cotton and Winthrop, and for these differences we hail him as the leading spokesman for this idea in seventeenth-century America. For one thing, it was for Hooker a living concept in a way that it was not for someone like Winthrop. The Fundamental Orders of 1639, in whatever light we care to read them, were a long and popular step forward from the charter of Massachusetts Bay of 1629. For another, it was in Hooker's philosophy an article of faith, in many another Puritan's a convenient hypothesis with no more popular substance than the contract of Hobbes. And surely in *The Summe of Church-Discipline* Hooker went a good deal further than any of his well-known contemporaries in proclaiming and discussing the covenant as the basis for all forms of social organization.

Hooker's theory of the covenant was quite unsophisticated. Had he ever been asked directly to account for the formation of the civil societies within his ken, he might have drawn on his scriptural and historical knowledge for such explanations as that of conquest or of the expanding family. When he was asked directly how such societies *ought* to be formed—as he apparently was at least once in his life—he replied, “In the free consent of the people.” But let us hear of the covenant from Hooker himself. Though the style is primitive, the spelling casual, the logic opaque, and the issues long dead, the meaning of *The Summe of Church-Discipline* cannot be misread. Hooker could have written chapters 7 and 8 of Locke's *Second Treatise*.

Mutuall covenanting and confoederating of the Saints in the fellowship of the faith according to the order of the Gospel, is that

which gives constitution and being to a visible Church. . . .

Its free for any man to offer to joyn with another who is fit for fellowship, or to refuse. Its as free [*sic*] for another to reject or receive such who offer, and therefore that they do joyn, it is by their own free consent and mutuall ingagement on both sides; which being past, that mutuall relation of ingagement, is as it were the sement, which soders the whole together: or like the mortising or brazing of the building, which gives fashion and firmnesse to the whole.

Whence it is evident, First, that it is not every relation, but such an ingagement, which issues from free consent, that makes the covenant.

Secondly, This ingagement gives each power over another, and maintains and holds up communion each with other, which cannot but be attended, according to the termes of the agreement.

And lastly it being of persons, who were wholly free, each from the other. There can be no necessary tye of mutuall accord and fellowship come, but by free ingagement, free (I say) in regard of any humane constraint. . . .

This Covenant is dispensed or acted after a double manner.

Either { Explicitly,
or
Implicitly.

An Explicite Covenant is, when there is an open expression and profession of this ingagement in the face of the Assembly, which persons by mutuall consent undertake in the waies of Christ.

An Implicite Covenant is, when in their practice they do that, whereby they make themselves ingaged to walk in such a society, according to such rules of government, which are exercised amongst them, and so submit themselves thereunto: but doe not make any verball profession thereof. . . .

3. Its most according to the compleatnesse of the rule, and for the better being of the Church, that there be an explicite covenant. . . .

3. *The reasons of the Covenant.*

I.

The first is taken from that resemblance which this policy hath with all other bodies politick. . . . Each whole or intire body, is

made up of his members, as, by mutuall reference and dependence they are ioyned each to the other. . . .

Its that sement which soders them all, that soul as it were, that acts all the parts and particular persons so interested in such a way, for there is no man constrained to enter into such a condition, unlesse he will: and he that will enter, must also willingly binde and ingage himself to each member of that society to promote the good of the whole, or else a member actually he is not. . . .

In all combinations there is and will be some common end: That end must have meanes to attaine it, to these meanes and rules each man must bind himself to attend, & in case he do not, to submit to another, to be directed and reformed, or else to yield to the whole, that he may be censured and removed therefrom. For otherwise the end cannot be attained, nor the meanes attended with profit, or any powerfull success in reason.

For if each man may do what is good in his owne eyes, proceed according to his own pleasure, so that none may crosse him or controll him by any power; there must of necessity follow the distraction and desolation of the whole, when each man hath liberty to follow his owne imagination and humorous devices, and seek his particular, but oppose one another, and all prejudice the publike good. . . .

Mutuall subjection is, as it were the sinewes of society, by which it is sustained and supported.⁵²

In Hooker's homely passages there were several rough deviations from the orthodox theory of the covenant that later generations, especially the revolutionary Americans, were to refine into a philosophy of liberty. These points might be noted in support of Hooker's position as an important precursor of democratic political theory: (1) the flat affirmation of ecclesiastical equality; (2) the equally flat affirmation of the doctrine of free consent, of the unprejudiced liberty of every man "to joyn . . . or to refuse" to join in the covenant; (3) the distinction between the explicit and implicit covenant and Hooker's popular preference for the former; (4) the attempt to justify the church covenant through its "resemblance . . . with all other bodies politick"; (5) the emphasis on the covenant as

⁵² *The Summe of Church Discipline*, part 1, 46-50, 69, 187-188.

one of man to man, at the expense of the covenant between man and God;⁵³ (6) the reminder of the duties that "mutuall ingagement" lays upon all participants; (7) the clear assertion that "the publike good" and "the good of the whole" are the purposes of a covenanted polity; and (8) the constant reiteration of the explosive doctrine, destined to be thundered from a thousand pulpits:

Mutuall subjection is, as it were the sinewes of society, by which it is sustained and supported.

We can now see the touch of Hooker's mighty hand in the preamble to the Fundamental Orders. Whatever else this primitive charter may have been, it was certainly one of the most outspoken plantation covenants in colonial New England. And the counsel of the master was writ large in its words:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased the Almighty God by the wise disposition of his diuyné providence so to Order and dispose of things that we the Inhabitants and Residents of Windsor, Harteford and Wethersfield are now cohabiting and dwelling in and vppon the River of Conectecotte and the Lands thereunto adioyning; And well knowing where a people are gathered together the word of God requires that to mayntayne the peace and vnion of a such people there should be an orderly and decent Gouerment established according to God, to order and dispose of the affayres of the people at all seasons as occation shall require; doe therefore associate and conioyne our selues to be as one Publike State or Commonwelth; and doe, for our selues and our Successors and such as shall be adioyned to vs att any tyme hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederacōn together, . . .

VI

Two other forward-looking doctrines, of which Hooker was the most constructive exponent among orthodox Puritans, proceeded from his concept of the covenant: the sovereignty of the people, which is the logical foundation of any consistent theory of free association, and limited magisterial authority, which is its most logical extension. It was on these two issues

⁵³ On this point, see *The Summe of Church-Discipline*, part 1, 78-81.

that he parted company with Winthrop and thereby heralded the future democratizing of the New England Way. It was on these issues that he showed himself to be a more genuine congregationalist than Cotton. Again we must remember that the disagreements among these worthy men were a matter of emphasis—especially on the relative importance to be accorded elders or magistrates on one hand, and congregation or citizenry on the other. Hooker never in his life gave countenance to straight-out democracy. Yet he did stress the ultimate power in the whole congregation, and he did oppose openly the autocratic notion of a magistracy elected for life and unrestricted by the letter of the written law.

A memorable passage in the preface to *The Summe of Church-Discipline* bears witness to Hooker's liberal definition of "the people"—the congregation in the visible church, the "Inhabitants and Residents" in the civil community.

But whether all Ecclesiasticall power be impaled, impropriated and rightly taken into the Presbytery alone: Or that the people of the particular Churches should come in for a share, according to their places and proportions: This is left as the subject of the inquiry of this age, and that which occasions great thoughts of heart of all hands. . . .

These are the times when people shall be fitted for such privileges, fit I say to obtain them, and fit to use them. . . .

And whereas it hath been charged upon the people, that through their ignorance and unskilfulnesse, they are not able to wield such privileges, and therefore not fit to share in any such power. The Lord hath promised: To take away the vail from all faces in the mountain, the weak shall be as David, and David as an Angel of God. The light of the Moon shall be as the Sun, and the Sun seven times brighter, when he hath not only informed them, but made them to be ashamed of their abominations, and of all that they have done, then he will shew them the frame of his house, and the patern thereof, the going out thereof, the coming in thereof, the whole fashion thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, all the figures thereof, and laws thereof: And write them in their sight, that they may keep the whole fashion thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, and do them. . . .

These are the thoughts of a man with faith in the right and capacity of the whole congregation to exercise the sovereign authority that God has bestowed upon it. To be sure, Hooker's ecclesiastical democracy was a democracy of the Saints, who were apparently few in early Connecticut, just as his political democracy was restricted to the godly, sober, and respectable. "The people" in Hooker's theory was a limited body, yet not nearly so limited as in Winthrop's or Endicott's. And surely he hoped that all men in time would deserve full ecclesiastical and political citizenship. Despite his orthodox persuasion concerning predestination, despite his eloquent despair with the crudeness and ignorance in men, he repeatedly stressed the reasonableness present in every man's mind and soul. There was nothing in this preacher's theology that made him, like some of his colleagues, *want* to believe that most men never could be Saints; there was nothing in his politics that made him believe that participation in government would always be the privilege and responsibility of the few. In announcing the sovereignty of all those who subscribed to the compact, in proclaiming that ecclesiastical and political authority should come from below and not from above, Hooker made strait in the New England desert a highway for later messengers of the belief that all men are qualified for free association. He was a better prophet than he realized of the revolutionary doctrine of popular sovereignty.

Hooker's opinion of the authority of the magistrates in civil affairs and of the elders in the church is most plainly read in the letters that he exchanged with Winthrop in 1638-1639. The sweeping and discretionary power of the magistracy was the marrow of the noble governor's political theory. Although Winthrop, too, was imbued with the covenant idea, his version of this Puritan belief was free of any popular taint. The reins of a decent form of government were firmly in the hands of ruling magistrates, just as the government of a true church was in the safekeeping of elders. With consistency and courage Winthrop proclaimed his doctrine of magisterial oligarchy to the restless inhabitants of Massachusetts. In his famous lay ser-

mon to the company aboard the *Arbella, A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630), he announced that God had called some people to be "highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subieccion." Fifteen years later, in the "little speech" to the General Court that had just acquitted him of the charge of exceeding his magisterial authority, he could still maintain with dignity and candor that the only true liberty of man was his liberty to "quietly and cheerfully submit to that authority which is set over" him.⁵⁴ It was this doctrine of the stewardship of a hand-picked magistracy over a people charged by heaven to submit cheerfully and permanently that Winthrop expounded in his letter to Hooker. In his notes the chief argument is summarized thus:

I expostulated about the unwarrantableness and unsafeness of referring matter of counsel or judicature to the body of the people, quia the best part is always the least, and of that best part the wiser part is always the lesser. The old law was, choose ye out judges etc. and thou shalt bring the matter to the judge etc.

Winthrop also wrote, as we learn from a passage in Hooker's letter, that "to referr the dicision of a civill question or controversy to whole churches cannot be safe."

To this blunt dismissal of the people's claims to political participation Hooker made a testy and unequivocal rejoinder. The revealing portions of his letter are these:

I fully assent to those staple principles which you sett downe: to witt: That the people should choose some from amongst them: that they should referr matter of counsell to their counsellours, matter of Judicature to ther iudges: Only the question here growes: what rule the Judge must have to iudge by: 2ly who those counsellours must be.

That in the matter which is referred to the iudge the sentence should lye in his breast, or be left to his discretion according to

⁵⁴ *Winthrop Papers*, II, 282-295; *Winthrop's Journal*, II, 237-239. See also *A Replie*, etc., and *Arbitrary Government Described*, in R. C. Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop* (Boston, 1869), II, 427-438, 440-460. See generally Stanley Gray, "The Political Thought of John Winthrop," *NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY*, III (1930), 681-705.

which he should goe: I am afraid it is a course which wants both safety and warrant: I must confesse I ever looked at it as a way which leads directly to tyranny, and so to confusion, and must playnly professe: If it was in my liberty, I should choose nether to live nor leave my posterity vnder such a government. . . .

And we know in other Countryes, had not the law overruled the lusts of men, and the crooked ends of iudges many tymes, both places and people had beene in reason past all releif in many cases of difficulty: you well knowe what the Heathen man sayd by the candell light of common sense: The law is not subject to passion, nor to be taken aside with self seeking ends, and therefore ought to have cheif rule over rulers them selves.

Its also a truth that counsell should be sought from counsellors: but the quaestion yet is, who those should be: Reserving smaller matters, which fall in occasionally in common course to a lower counsell: In matters of greater consequence, which concern the common good, a generall counsell chosen by all to transact businesses which concerne all, I conceive vnder favour most sutable to rule and most safe for releif of the wholl. This was the practise of the Jewish church directed by God Deutr. 17:10:11; 2 Cron: 19 and the approved experience of the best ordered states give in evidence this way: Salomons one wise man, and the one wise woman in Abell that delivered the city shows the excellency of wisdom and of counsell where it is, but doth not conclude that one or few should be counsellors, since in the multitude of counsellors ther is safety.

Hooker's thinking about the status of the magistrates was at odds with Winthrop's in at least four essentials: They were to be chosen by the people at regular intervals; they were to do justice not at their own discretion but in accordance with the written law; they were to consult the people and defer to their measured judgment in all "matters of greater consequence, which concern the common good"; and they were to act subject to the authority of the people "to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place" to which they had been called. If we add to these tenets the broader definition of "the people" toward which Hooker assuredly looked, we have arrived at an acceptable definition of representative democracy.

VII

Hooker died at Hartford July 7, 1647, the victim of "an epidemical sickness" that had swept the northern colonies.⁵⁵ His eleven years in Connecticut had been devoted in the fullest measure to the needs of his people, and in all his labors he had been generous and self-effacing. It is almost unbelievable how few scraps of direct or even hearsay evidence we have of his ministry in Hartford. The Connecticut records scarcely acknowledge his existence, except in such passages as this:

Walter Gray, for his misdemeanor in laboring to inueagle the affections of Mr. Hoochers mayde, is to be publiquely corrected the next lecture day.⁵⁶

In this light, it is somewhat amusing to read the eighteenth-century jeer of Samuel Peters, "Hooker reigned twelve years high-priest over Hertford,"⁵⁷ or the twentieth-century observation of Perry Miller and T. H. Johnson, "For the rest of his life he was the virtual dictator of Connecticut."⁵⁸ These remarks do little justice to the character of men like Ludlow, Haynes, Wolcott, Hopkins, Steele, and, if I may be pardoned the gesture, Dr. Rossiter of Windsor. Hooker was neither high priest nor dictator, but a preacher whose fusion of benevolence and eloquence sustained the colony through the first awkward decade. The fact that only one person in his church was excommunicated during his ministry bears witness to the tenacity of his life-long conviction that, "If men would be tender and carefull to keep off offensive expressions, they might keep some distance in opinion, in some things, without hazard

⁵⁵ See *Winthrop's Journal*, II, 326-327; the letter of Samuel Stone to Thomas Shepard, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, VIII (4th ser.), 544-546; and Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 317.

⁵⁶ *Connecticut Colonial Records*, I, 124. The most informative piece of evidence we have of Hooker's life in Connecticut is his will, which may be found in *Connecticut Colonial Records*, I, 498-502, or Walker, *Thomas Hooker*, 178-189.

⁵⁷ *A General History of Connecticut* (London, 1787), 59.

⁵⁸ *The Puritans*, 291.

to truth or love."⁵⁹ If he did go out of his way to keep dissent in check, he did it in the knowledge that one ill-tempered controversy like those provoked by Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson would have been enough to rend asunder the infant experiment. Stability, too, has its uses for freedom.

There is little else that we need add by way of conclusion to this account of the masterful life and selfless preaching of "the Light of the Western Churches."⁶⁰ He was neither democrat nor constitutionalist, but a child of his time and place. He was not an advocate of religious freedom or toleration, but a staunch believer in the oneness of church and state.⁶¹ And he certainly had no such modern notions as that of "the state as a public-service corporation," which Parrington pinned on him in what must have been a transport of liberal rapture.⁶² But in his primitive encounters with the magnificent theories of the social compact, the sovereignty of the people, and the authority of the electors to set limits upon the elected, Hooker took such a conspicuous step toward the democracy of the future that he must unquestionably be celebrated in the annals of American liberty. He first planted and nurtured in New England soil the seeds of democracy hidden away in the brittle pod of Puritanism. He first proved, all unwittingly, that the New England Way contained the means of its own liberation.

⁵⁹ Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 316-317. The quotation is from the preface to *The Summe of Church-Discipline*. See also Hooker's letter of July 15, 1643, "to his much Honoured freind John Wynthropp Esquier," *Winthrop Papers*, IV, 401-402. C. M. Andrews, in his charming essay, "Early Aspects of Connecticut History," emphasizes the isolation, provincialism, and social homogeneity of Connecticut as factors that explain why it was spared much of the controversy that plagued early Massachusetts.

⁶⁰ Mather, *Magnalia*, I, 302.

⁶¹ For Hooker's thoroughly orthodox opinion of the support owed one another by magistrate and minister, see *The Summe of Church-Discipline*, part II, 79-80, and part IV, 54-59. See also M. Louise Greene, *The Development of Religious Liberty in Connecticut* (Boston, 1905), 62-63.

⁶² *Main Currents in American Thought*, I, 59.

THE INOCULATION CONTROVERSY IN BOSTON: 1721-1722

JOHN B. BLAKE

OF all the diseases affecting colonial America, none caused more consternation than smallpox. Highly contagious, once it gained a foothold, it spread rapidly and with fearful mortality. Recognizing these facts, the authorities of Massachusetts developed certain techniques designed to keep this scourge under control. They required incoming vessels with smallpox aboard to perform quarantine at Spectacle Island in Boston harbor, and when cases appeared in town, the Selectmen removed the patients to a pesthouse or placed guards about the infected dwellings. Although these precautions often proved successful, they were unable entirely to prevent periodic epidemics. During one of these outbreaks, in 1721, inoculation of the smallpox was first tried in the colonies. It enraged the town and called forth a bitter newspaper and pamphlet war, but it was the earliest important experiment in preventive medicine in America.

The practice was not new in 1721. People in certain parts of Africa, India, and China had been using inoculation for centuries. Even in Europe there was some reference to it in a verse production of the School of Salerno in the tenth or eleventh century. The first authentic reports were published in Leipzig between 1670 and 1705. In other parts of Europe it was employed as a part of folk-medicine.¹ Late in the seventeenth century, accounts of the Asiatic practice began arriving in England, and in February, 1699/1700, Dr. Clopton Havers called it to the attention of the Royal Society. Certainly by this time many Englishmen had heard of the art.²

¹ Arnold C. Klebs, "The Historic Evolution of Variolation," Johns Hopkins Hospital, *Bulletin*, xxiv (1913), 70; Charles G. Cumston, "Historical Notes on Smallpox and Inoculation," *Annals of Medical History*, vi (1924), 469.

² Raymond P. Stearns and George Pasti, Jr., "Remarks upon the Introduction of Inoculation for Smallpox in England," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, xxiv (1959), 106-108.

In the following two decades, after inoculation had become popular in Turkey, it was more fully studied, reported, and recommended in the western world. During a smallpox epidemic in 1713 it again came up for discussion in the Royal Society. In May, 1714, Dr. John Woodward, Professor of Physic at Gresham College, communicated to this scientific organization an enthusiastic endorsement from Dr. Emanuel Timonius of Constantinople.³ Other correspondents also reported on the practice, and two years later the Society published another favorable account by Jacobus Pylarinus.⁴ Not until April, 1721, however, did the first recorded inoculation take place in England, on the daughter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Another child received the treatment in May. Princess Caroline became interested, and in August six felons offered themselves for experiment. After other trials the two royal daughters were successfully inoculated in April, 1722.⁵

In Massachusetts, meanwhile, some of Cotton Mather's parishioners gave him a Negro slave in 1706. No doubt Mather asked him if he had had the smallpox, and received then his first confused intimation of the practice of inoculation as some of the African natives carried it out. Further questioning of several other Negroes and some Guinea slave traders confirmed the tale. Sometime before July, 1716, Mather also received a copy of Timonius's communication in the *Philosophical Transactions*. In a letter to Dr. Woodward of July 12, 1716, he corroborated this account with what he had heard and inquired why the practice was not tried in England. "For my own part," he wrote, "if I should live to see the *Small-Pox* again enter into our City, I would immediately procure a Consult of

³ Emanuel Timonius, "An Account, or History, of the Procuring the Small Pox by Incision, or Inoculation; as It Has for Some Time Been Practised at Constantinople," Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*, No. 339, xxix (April-May-June, 1714), 72-82.

⁴ Jacobus Pylarinus, "Nova & Tuta Variolas Excitandi per Transplantationem Methodus, Nuper Inventa & in Usus Tracta," Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*, No. 347, xxix (Jan.-Feb.-Mar., 1716), 393-399.

⁵ Stearns and Pasti, "Introduction of Inoculation in England," *Bull. Hist. Med.*, xxiv (1950), 109-114; Klebs, "Evolution of Variolation," *Johns Hopkins Hospital, Bulletin*, xxiv (1913), 71-72.

our Physicians, to Introduce a Practice, which may be of so very happy a Tendency." ⁶ At least five years in advance, therefore, Mather had seriously considered the policy he was later to follow. ⁷

On April 22, 1721, among several ships arriving from the West Indies was H.M.S. *Seahorse*, which brought the smallpox. Not until May 8, however, did the Selectmen learn that a Negro who came on the naval vessel was in town with the disease. When they heard of another case at Captain Wentworth Paxton's house, they ordered two men to stand guard there and let no one in or out without their permission. A few days later, at the request of the town, the Governor and Council ordered the *Seahorse* down to Bird Island to prevent further infection from this source, but not until after several other sick members of the company had come ashore. As late as May 20 the Selectmen could find no more cases, but two days later the town nevertheless instructed its representatives to seek further legislation to enable the Selectmen to prevent the spread of infectious sickness. On the twenty-fourth the Selectmen set twenty-six free Negroes to work cleaning the streets as a preventive measure, but without avail. On May 27 there were eight known cases, and by the middle of June the disease was in so many houses that the Selectmen abandoned the system of guards. ⁸

By this time Cotton Mather had decided to carry out his previous plan. Considering it his Christian duty—and worrying about his own children—on June 6 he circulated a letter about inoculation among the physicians of Boston, along with

⁶ George L. Kittredge, "Introduction," Increase Mather, *Several Reasons Proving That Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox, Is a Lawful Practice, and That It Has Been Blessed by God for the Saving of Many a Life* (Cleveland, 1921), 5.

⁷ Kittredge, 2-6; George L. Kittredge, "Some Lost Works of Cotton Mather," *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings*, XLV (1911-1912), 420-427.

⁸ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report* (Boston, 1876-1898), VIII, 154-155; XIII, 81-83; Massachusetts General Court, *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1869-1922), X, 105; *Boston News-Letter*, May 22, 29, 1721; William Douglass to Cadwallader Colden, May 1, 1722, New-York Historical Society, *Collections*, L (1917), 141-142.

an abstract of the accounts by Timonius and Pylarinus. "*Gentlemen,*" he wrote, "My request is, that you would meet for a Consultation upon this Occasion, and to deliberate upon it, that whoever first begins this practise, (if you approve that it should be begun at all) may have the concurrence of his worthy Brethren to fortify him in it."⁹ Whatever their reasons, they made no reply. On June 24, after the guards had been taken off the houses, he wrote another letter strongly recommending the technique to Dr. Zabdiel Boylston.¹⁰ This may have convinced the physician, for two days later he inoculated his six-year-old son Thomas and two of his Negroes. After several anxious days the experiment proved successful, and on July 12 he inoculated Joshua Cheever. Two days later John Helyer and another Negro underwent the operation. On the seventeenth Boylston treated his son John, and on the nineteenth three more people, bringing the total to ten.¹¹

The populace was quickly aroused. The idea had caused talk soon after Mather brought it up; within four days after Boylston's first experiment it "raised an horrid Clamour. . . ."¹² In an advertisement in the *Boston Gazette* on July 17 the physician justified his action on the grounds of the reports of Timonius and Pylarinus and his own successful experiments, but when he indicated his intention to continue by the announcement that "*in a few Weeks more, I hope to give you some further proof of their just and reasonable Account,*" he no doubt increased the people's wrath. Cotton Mather, convinced of the value of the practice, thought the Devil had "taken a strange Possession of the People," and noted sadly in his

⁹ *A Vindication of the Ministers of Boston, from the Abuses & Scandals, Lately Cast upon Them, in Diverse Printed Papers* (Boston, 1722), 8; Cotton Mather, *Diary* (Mass. Hist. Soc., Collections, ser. vii, vol. VII-VIII, 1911-1912), II, 620-622.

¹⁰ Reginald H. Fitz, *Zabdiel Boylston, Inoculator, and the Epidemic of Small-pox in Boston in 1721* (n.p., [1911], reprinted from Johns Hopkins Hospital, Bulletin, XXII, 1911, 315-327), 10.

¹¹ Zabdiel Boylston, *An Historical Account of the Small-Pox Inoculated in New England, upon All Sorts of Persons, Whites, Blacks, and of All Ages and Constitutions . . .* (2d ed., London, 1726, reprinted at Boston, 1730), 2-7.

¹² C. Mather, *Diary*, II, 628.

diary that not only Boylston but he himself was also "an Object of their Fury; their furious Obloquies and Invectives."¹³

Soon the Selectmen felt they must act. On July 21 they and some Justices of the Peace met with several members of the medical profession. Disregarding Boylston's invitation to see some of his patients,¹⁴ they accepted instead Dr. Lawrence Dalhonde's statement that inoculation in Italy, Spain, and Flanders had led to horrible *sequelae*, and pronounced that it "has proved the Death of many Persons," that it "Tends to spread and continue the Infection," and that its continuance "is likely to prove of most dangerous consequence."¹⁵ On this basis the Selectmen and Justices severely reprimanded Boylston and forbade him to continue the practice.¹⁶

Three days later Dr. William Douglass, who led the professional opposition, tried a new attack in a communication to the *News-Letter*. He credited Mather with "a Pious & Charitable design of doing good," but attacked Boylston for "*His mischievous propagating the Infection in the most Publick Trading Place of the Town. . .*" He called on the ministers to determine "how the trusting more the extra groundless *Machinations of Men* than to our Preserver in the ordinary course of Nature, may be consistent with that Devotion and Subjection we owe to the *all-wise Providence* of GOD Almighty." Of the lawyers he inquired "how it may be construed a *Propagating of Infection and Criminal*."¹⁷ On the thirty-first the ministers' reply appeared in the *Gazette*, signed by Increase and Cotton Mather, Benjamin Colman, Thomas Prince, John Webb, and William Cooper. After upholding Boylston's professional skill, they declared that if, as they believed, inocu-

¹³ C. Mather, *Diary*, II, 632.

¹⁴ Boylston, *Historical Account*, 3-4; *Boston Gazette*, July 31, 1721.

¹⁵ *News-Letter*, July 24, 1721.

¹⁶ [Cotton Mather], *An Account of the Method and Success of Inoculating the Small-Pox, in Boston in New-England* (London, 1722), 11; *New-England Courant*, Aug. 7, 1721.

¹⁷ *News-Letter*, July 24, 1721. As was his wont, Douglass added several gratuitous insults to Boylston.

lation could save lives, they accepted it "with all thankfulness and joy as the gracious Discovery of a *Kind Providence* to Mankind. . . ." Use of this operation, they said, like that of any other medical treatment, depended on God's blessing and was fully consistent with "*a humble Trust . . . and a due Subjection*" to the Lord. When James Franklin's new paper, the *New-England Courant*, appeared on August 7, the anti-inoculators had their medium, and a furious newspaper and pamphlet war ensued.

Boylston, meanwhile, backed by the six ministers, disregarded the Selectmen's orders and on August 5 resumed inoculating. During that month he performed the operation on seventeen people, in September on thirty-one, and the next month on eighteen. Among the last were three men from Roxbury who, after their recovery, returned to recommend it there. November was his busiest month, with one hundred and four inoculations. Several ministers and other prominent men encouraged the practice by their example. On September 23 the Honorable Thomas Fitch, Esq., tried the new technique. Others included the Reverend Thomas Walter on October 31, and in November, the Reverend Ebenezer Pierpont, Anthony Stoddard, Esq., John White, Esq., the Honorable Judge Quincy's son Edmund, Edward Wigglesworth, and William Welsted, professor and fellow respectively at Harvard, Justice Samuel Sewall's grandson Samuel Hirst, the Honorable Jonathan Belcher's son Andrew, and the Reverend Nehemiah Walter. On December 8, even a doctor, Elijah Danforth of Roxbury, submitted to the test.¹⁸

Whatever the clergymen and esquires may have thought of inoculation, the people as a whole continued to oppose it violently. They were urged on by most of the local physicians, one of whom went so far as to assert that it would breed in Boston bubonic plague, which was then devastating southern France.¹⁹ One man vented his feelings about three in the

¹⁸ Boylston, *Historical Account*, 7-31, 50; *News-Letter*, Mar. 5, 1729/1730.

¹⁹ *Courant*, Aug. 14, 1721.

morning of November 14 by throwing a lighted grenade into Cotton Mather's house.²⁰ Ten days previously, shortly after Boylston began receiving patients from Roxbury and Charlestown, the town had expressed its official attitude by voting that anyone who came into Boston to be inoculated should be forthwith sent to the pesthouse unless he returned home, "Least by allowing this practice the Town be made an Hospital for that which may prove worse than the Small pox, which has already put So many into mourning. . . ."²¹ The Selectmen thereupon requested the Justices for warrants to remove such persons.²² When several ministers were accused of encouraging country people to come into Boston to be inoculated despite the town's vote, the Selectmen called them to a meeting, but "after some hot Discourse on both sides" they denied it.²³

Meanwhile the epidemic also raged. Soon after it began, trade was disrupted, and many people fled. One person died in May, eight in June, eleven in July, and twenty-six in August.²⁴ That month the General Court, which was sitting at the George Tavern on the Neck, appointed three men to stand guard at the door of the House of Representatives to prevent anyone from Boston entering without special license.²⁵ In September, when the deaths jumped to one hundred and one, the Selectmen severely limited the length of time funeral bells could toll.²⁶ When the sloopmen who normally supplied the town with wood refused to bring it in, the Selectmen made special arrangements to allay their fear and avert a fuel shortage, perhaps on the suggestion of Cotton

²⁰ C. Mather, *Diary*, II, 657-658; *News-Letter*, Nov. 20, 1721.

²¹ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, VIII, 159.

²² Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, XIII, 90-91.

²³ *Courant*, Nov. 20, 1721. Yet as late as Jan. 13, 1721/1722, Cotton Mather recorded in his *Diary* (II, 670): "Make an offer to a Minister at Marble-head, likely to be murdered by an abominable People, that will not let him save his Life, from the Small-Pox, in the Way of Inoculation. Offer to receive and cover him."

²⁴ *News-Letter*, Feb. 26, 1721/1722.

²⁵ Mass. *Acts and Resolves*, X, 105.

²⁶ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, XIII, 87.

Mather.²⁷ When the General Court met again on November 7, in Cambridge, the members were "very solicitous of Returning to their Homes as soon as may be,"²⁸ for by then the smallpox was in the college town. The session lasted only ten days, most of the time being taken up with the Indian war in Maine and quarrels with the Governor. The legislators did find time, however, to tighten up the law against peddlers, who were charged with spreading the disease.²⁹ More helpful was the thousand pounds voted from the public treasury for the Selectmen and overseers of the poor to distribute among the many people "reduced to Very Great Strieghts & Necessitous Circumstances," who could otherwise have supported their families comfortably.³⁰ Along with the contributions from other towns, it was no doubt gratefully received.³¹

By then the epidemic was beginning to decline. October had been the worst month, with four hundred and eleven deaths. In November the total dropped to two hundred and forty-nine, and by mid-December, according to the Selectmen, the mortality was not much higher than in time of health.³² During January and February Boylston inoculated only twelve people, none in Boston.³³ On February 26 the Selectmen issued an official statement that there were no more known cases in the town. Altogether, since April, 5,889 people, of whom 844 died, had had the smallpox. This one disease caused more than three-fourths of all the deaths in Boston during the year of the epidemic.³⁴ During the same period Boylston inoculated

²⁷ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, xiii, 88-89; *News-Letter*, Sept. 25, 1721; C. Mather, *Diary*, II, 646.

²⁸ Massachusetts General Court, House of Representatives, *Journals* (Boston, 1919-), III, 146.

²⁹ 1721-1722, ch. 6, *Mass. Acts and Resolves*, II, 232.

³⁰ *Mass. Acts and Resolves*, x, 123.

³¹ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, VIII, 159; *Courant*, Jan. 1, 1721/1722.

³² *News-Letter*, Feb. 26, 1721/1722; Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, XIII, 92.

³³ Boylston, *Historical Account*, 32-duplicate 31.

³⁴ *News-Letter*, Feb. 26, Mar. 12, 1721/1722.

242 persons, with 6 deaths.³⁵ Except for a few recurrences in April and May the epidemic was over in the capital.³⁶

Then, on May 11, 1722, Boylston inoculated Samuel Sewall, a Boston merchant and nephew of the diarist, his wife, three boys in his household, and Joanna Alford, the first he had done since February 24, and the first in Boston since December.³⁷ The people were incensed. The Selectmen quickly removed these new cases to Spectacle Island to keep them from communicating the infection to anyone else,³⁸ and called Boylston before the town meeting, where he "did solemnly promise to Inoculate no more without the knowledge & approbation of the Authority of the Town."³⁹ Douglass gloated: Last January *Inoculation* made a Sort of *Exit*, like the Infatuation Thirty Years ago, after several had fallen Victims to the mistaken Notions of Dr. M—r and other learned Clerks concerning Witchcraft. But finding Inoculation in this Town, like the Serpents in Summer, beginning to crawl abroad again the last Week, it was in time, and effectually crushed in the Bud, by the *Justices, Select-Men*, and the *unanimous Vote* of a general Town-Meeting.⁴⁰

The voters also instructed their representatives to seek legislation regulating inoculation and prohibiting it in any town without the Selectmen's permission. Since some question had arisen over the interpretation of the act relating to contagious diseases, the people wanted their officials "Clothed with full power to obtain the great End & Designe of that Law, which is for the Preservation, Health, and Safty, of the Inhabitants."⁴¹

The House had already passed a "Bill to prevent the Spreading of the Infection of the Small-Pox by the practice of Inocu-

³⁵ Boylston, *Historical Account*, 50; *News-Letter*, Mar. 5, 1729/1730.

³⁶ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, XIII, 96; *News-Letter*, Apr. 16, 1722; *Gazette*, May 21, 1722.

³⁷ Boylston, *Historical Account*, duplicate 31-duplicate 32; Frederick G. Kilgour, "Thomas Robie (1689-1729), Colonial Scientist and Physician," *Isis*, xxx (1939), 486-487.

³⁸ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, VIII, 165; XIII, 97-98; *Gazette*, May 21, 1722.

³⁹ *Gazette*, May 21, 1722.

⁴⁰ *Courant*, May 21, 1722.

⁴¹ Boston Record Commissioners, *Report*, VIII, 166-167.

lation" in March, 1721/1722, but the Council had turned it down.⁴² Perhaps for this reason the representatives made no further attempt to pass a general law. Their attitude, however, was unchanged. When the Boston assemblymen brought up the subject of Samuel Sewall and the others sent to Spectacle Island, the General Court resolved on June 2, 1722, that they should not come to Boston as long as the legislature was in session. As late as July 3 the House denied a petition passed by the Council to rescind this order.⁴³

An analysis of the whole controversy shows that several factors were involved. One source of opposition to inoculation was the religious scruples of earnest and devout people. Some maintained that it was a sin for a healthy person to bring the sickness upon himself, especially since he might otherwise escape it altogether, and that he should in submission to God's will leave it to Him to determine whether or not he would suffer the disease. Another argument was that since the epidemic was sent by God, the only proper recourse was repentance and reformation; inoculation only increased the guilt because it was a rebellious attempt to take God's work out of His hands and showed distrust in His promises.⁴⁴

It is impossible that any *Humane Means*, or *preventive Physick* should defend us from, or *Over-rule a Judicial National Sickness*; for were it so, Wicked and Atheistical Men would have the same terms and conditions of *Security* in a *Physical Respect*, with the most Holy and Religious. And *National Judgments* would not have the *Designed Ends* for which they were sent *National Amendment*.⁴⁵

Some of Boston's leading ministers, however, easily answered these arguments. It was not unlawful to make oneself

⁴² *House Journals*, III, 178, 181, 184-185; Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay* (Lawrence S. Mayo, editor, Cambridge, 1936), II, 208.

⁴³ *Mass. Acts and Resolves*, x, 161; *House Journals*, IV, 66.

⁴⁴ *The Imposition of Inoculation as a Duty Religiously Considered in a Letter to a Gentleman in the Country Inclined to Admit It* (Boston, 1721), 4-15; *Courant*, Aug. 28, 1721.

⁴⁵ *Imposition of Inoculation Religiously Considered*, 9.

sick in this manner, they declared; rather it was a duty because it was a protection against a worse sickness. In the same way, they pointed out, other preventive medicines such as purges and vomits were used, and no one considered that sinful. William Cooper provided the most complete rebuttal. It was not faith, he said, but presumption for anyone to think that God would preserve him when walking in an infected atmosphere. One must, of course, rely primarily on the Lord, he said, but this did not preclude the use of the best human help afforded by His providence. Recourse to inoculation did not take God's work from His hands, for both inoculated and natural small-pox were secondary causes and therefore under Him the First Cause. While agreeing that the epidemic was God's judgment for the sins of the community, he believed that the people should be thankful for His mercy in sending the means to escape the extremity of destruction. Inoculation, he said, might be God's chosen instrument to preserve life as long as He had predestined it; no one, he pointed out, relied on predestination to keep himself from starving. Admittedly there was no guarantee that an inoculated person would not die. But after serious consideration of this, the knottiest problem of all, Cooper believed that if a person died under this operation, he died in the use of the most likely means he knew to save his life in time of peril, and, therefore, in the way of duty and so in God's way.⁴⁶

The religious question, though significant, should not be overemphasized. While much of the argument was couched in religious terms, the real dividing point was medical. The Sixth Commandment was frequently mentioned, but whether for or against depended on what the medical results of inoculation were alleged to be. None of the opponents was content to rest his case on the necessity of trusting in God's providence; however they phrased it, they all thought the practice harmful to the health and lives of their fellow-citizens.

⁴⁶ [William Cooper], *A Letter to a Friend in the Country, Attempting a Solution of the Scruples & Objections of a Conscientious or Religious Nature, Commonly Made against the New Way of Receiving the Small-Pox* (Boston, 1721), 3-11.

In the passion of the fight both sides exaggerated either the ease and safety of the practice on the one hand, or its horrors and dangers on the other. The proponents' fundamental argument, however, was that it gave the patient a mild case of smallpox which protected him from the natural one. They cited the reports of Timonius and Pylarinus, and Boylston published Mather's abstracts.⁴⁷ They pointed out that in Africa the Negroes had long carried on this practice to great advantage. They ridiculed the assertions that it would cause plague or debilitate the constitution. In particular they called to witness the results of Boylston's own trials. Old and young, weak and strong, had been inoculated, they said, with success beyond expectation. After making excuses for the sole death at the time he wrote, Increase Mather declared:

It is then a wonderful Providence of GOD, that all that were *Inoculated* should have their Lives preserved; so that the Safety and Usefulness of this Experiment is confirmed to us by Ocular Demonstration: I confess I am afraid, that the Discouraging of this Practice, may cause many a Life to be lost, which for my own part, I should be loth to have any hand in, *because of the Sixth Commandment*.⁴⁸

When we see how easily it enables people to pass through smallpox, said Benjamin Colman, we should praise the Lord for His mercy in providing it.⁴⁹ "*In fine*;" added Cotton Mather, "*Experience has declared, that there never was a more un-failing Remedy employed among the Children of Men.*"⁵⁰

Although some objections were fantastic and some pica-yune, anti-inoculators also had sound arguments. They emphasized the known deaths among the inoculated—which the Mathers tried to explain away—and hinted of others. They

⁴⁷ Zabdiel Boylston, publisher, *Some Account of What Is Said of Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox* (Boston, 1721).

⁴⁸ I. Mather, *Several Reasons*, 72.

⁴⁹ Benjamin Colman, *Some Observations on the New Method of Receiving the Small-Pox by Ingrafting or Inoculating* (Boston, 1721), 1-5.

⁵⁰ Cotton Mather, *Sentiments on the Small Pox Inoculated* (with I. Mather, *Several Reasons*, Cleveland, 1921), 76.

said, rightly, that the technique endangered the individual who submitted to it. Their chief contention was that inoculation as performed by Boylston spread the epidemic. John Williams maintained that anyone who voluntarily took the smallpox violated the moral law of God—"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—by bringing the disease to his neighbor.⁵¹

The anonymous author of *A Letter from One in the Country, to His Friend in the City* expressed this viewpoint ably. As he saw it, Boylston introduced the practice without the consent of the other physicians soon after the guards had been removed from stricken houses, when there was still a possibility that the epidemic would not spread. Is it not an offense against the government, he asked, to infect one's own family with the smallpox despite the cries of civil authority, professional brethren, and neighbors? "If a man should wilfully throw a Bomb into a Town, . . . ought he not to die? so if a man should wilfully bring Infection from a person sick of a deadly and contagious Disease, into a place of Health; is not the mischief as great?"⁵² The author was willing to allow those who favored inoculation to practice it, but only where they would not threaten the rest of the community. He felt sure, and he was right, that the people who urged the new technique never thought of regulating it, "which ought to have been the very first step in a matter of such concernment to a people."⁵³ He hoped the General Court would act:

That if they allow it, there may be proper Pest Houses in solitary places, to receive those that have a mind thus voluntarily to infect themselves, with severe penalties on those that shall dare to do otherwise, to the endangering the lives of their honest Neighbours. . . .⁵⁴

⁵¹ John Williams, *Several Arguments, Proving that Inoculating the Small Pox Is Not Contained in the Law of Physick, Either Natural or Divine, and Therefore Unlawful* (2d ed., Boston, 1721), 3-4.

⁵² *A Letter from One in the Country, to His Friend in the City; in Relation to Their Distresses Occasioned by the Doubtful and Prevailing Practice of the Inoculation of the Small-Pox* (Boston, 1721), 3-4.

⁵³ *Letter from One in the Country*, 7.

⁵⁴ *Letter from One in the Country*, 8.

This was a sound suggestion. Unfortunately it was not carried out for many years.

Religious and medical divisions were not the only causes of the heat of the controversy. In part they were due to the personalities involved, particularly those of Cotton Mather and William Douglass. The former, pedantic, tactless, egotistical, convinced that those who opposed him were possessed of the Devil, yet rejoicing in the prospect of martyrdom at the hands of Satan's minions (the town), asserted that raving and railing against "*the Ministers, and other serious Christians, who favour this Practice, is a very crying Iniquity; and to call it a Work of the Devil . . . is a shocking Blasphemy. . .*"⁵⁵ He or one of his cohorts accused the anti-inoculation physicians of being another "Hell-Fire Club," a current, notorious group of blasphemers in England.⁵⁶ Douglass, on the other hand, accused Mather of credulity, whim, and vanity, of omissions and errors in his abstracts of Timonius and Pylarinus, and of misrepresentation; and he called Boylston an illiterate quack.⁵⁷ Douglass, apparently, thought he should be the leader of whatever was happening in local medical affairs and was prone to disparage any who were not his sycophants. Nine years later he declared that Mather had "surreptitiously" set Boylston to work, "that he might have the honour of a Newfangled notion."⁵⁸ One suspects that some of his bitterness resulted from his own failure to take the lead. Eventually he came to favor the practice, but he never forgave his two opponents.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ C. Mather, *Sentiments on the Small Pox Inoculated*, 78-79; Mather's *Diary* for the period (II, 620-674) is full of such opinions.

⁵⁶ *News-Letter*, Aug. 28, 1721.

⁵⁷ [William Douglass], *The Abuses and Scandals of Some Late Pamphlets in Favour of Inoculation of the Small Pox, Modestly Obviated, and Inoculation Further Consider'd in a Letter to A—S—M. D. & F. R. S. in London* (Boston, 1722), 6-7; [William Douglass], *Inoculation of the Small Pox as Practised in Boston, Consider'd in a Letter to A—S—M. D. & F. R. S.* (Boston, 1722), 1-13; *News-Letter*, July 24, 1721.

⁵⁸ [William Douglass], *A Dissertation Concerning Inoculation of the Small-Pox* (Boston, 1730), 2.

⁵⁹ William Douglass, *A Summary, Historical and Political, of the First Planting, Progressive Improvements, and Present State of the British Settlements in North-America* (London, 1755), II, 409.

The clash between Mather and Douglass stemmed from more than their personalities, for they also stood for two different principles. The minister was in effect maintaining the right of his profession to interfere with and control the life of the community. This is why he and his father—the ordained leaders in all things—became so incensed when others defied them. We say that inoculation is good and lawful, they seemed to assert; therefore all men must believe it. The wise and judicious people of Massachusetts approved it, wrote Increase Mather, referring to the magistrates and ministers, himself and his son. Those who opposed were of a different breed:

Furthermore, I have made some Enquiry, Whether there are many Persons of a Prophan Life and Conversation, that do Approve and Defend *Inoculation*, and I have been answered, that they know but of very few such. This is to me a weighty Consideration. But on the other hand, tho' there are some Worthy Persons, that are not clear about it; nevertheless, it cannot be denied, but that the known Children of the Wicked one, are generally fierce Enemies to Inoculation.⁶⁰

To those with a troubled conscience, Mather suggested that they seek guidance from their religious advisers. But as for Douglass, no one could "in rational Charity" think that he had

the least spark of Grace in his heart . . . ; for in his Pamphlet there are many impudent and malicious Lies, and the whole design of it is to jeer and abuse the faithful Messengers of GOD, which is far from a sign of Piety. 2 Chron. 36. 16.⁶¹

Douglass, on the other hand, was defending the integrity of the medical profession against the interference of those whom he considered to be credulous laymen. He pointed out that no one should accept all the quaint things published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, that Mather's sources of information—accounts from the Levant and from untutored Negroes—were

⁶⁰ I. Mather, *Several Reasons*, 73.

⁶¹ Increase Mather, *Some Further Account from London, of the Small-Pox Inoculated* (2d ed., Boston, 1721), 5.

at best questionable.⁶² His principal complaint was that despite the opposition of the town, the Selectmen, and the medical profession, "Six Gentlemen of Piety and Learning, profoundly ignorant of the Matter," rashly advocated a new and doubtful procedure in "a Disease one of the most intricate practical Cases in Physick. . . ."⁶³ By January, 1721/1722, Douglass was willing to admit that inoculated smallpox was frequently more favorable than natural and that the practice was at least a temporary, palliative preventive. Though pessimistic, he thought that it might with improvement become a specific smallpox preventive. But, he declared, it must be allowed by an act of the legislature and carried out by "abler hands, than *Greek old Women, Madmen and Fools.*" He wanted a period of cautious experimentation. "For my own Part," he said, "till after a few Years, I shall pass no positive Judgment of this bold Practice."⁶⁴

Douglass' attitude toward the clergy brought him allies who opposed them chiefly for political reasons. Among them was John Williams. Much of his stuff was nonsense, some of it mildly amusing, but a large part was devoted to comprehensive attacks on the ministers. Claiming that inoculation was "a Delusion of the Devil," he compared it to "the Time of the Witchcraft at Salem, when so many innocent Persons lost their Lives. . . ."⁶⁵ He blasted the ministers for going outside their calling by trying to control such public affairs as inoculation and paper money. "Now the People are afraid," he declared, "the Ministers do affect a Rule over them in Temporals, as the Pope of *Rome* does temporally as well as spiritually, rule and determine things."⁶⁶

James Franklin also seized this opportunity to belabor the

⁶² [Douglass], *Inoculation as Practised in Boston*, 1-9; [Douglass], *Abuses and Scandals*, 6-10.

⁶³ *Courant*, Aug. 7, 1721.

⁶⁴ [Douglass], *Inoculation as Practised in Boston*, 20.

⁶⁵ John Williams, *An Answer to a Late Pamphlet, Intituled, a Letter to a Friend in the Country* (Boston, 1722), 4.

⁶⁶ Williams, *Answer to a Late Pamphlet*, 11.

clergy. "I pray Sir," asked "Layman" in a debate with "Clergyman" printed in Franklin's *Courant*:

who have been Instruments of Mischief and Trouble both in Church and State, from the Witchcraft to Inoculation? who is it that takes the Liberty to Villify a whole Town, in Words too black to be repeated? Who is it that in common Conversation makes no Bones of calling the Town a MOB?⁶⁷

Another *Friendly Debate* which he published just before the annual meeting for choosing town officers used the controversy to introduce an attack on the ministers, particularly Cotton Mather, for electioneering against the incumbent Selectmen, for attempting to run the town, and for scorning the "Leather Apron Men."⁶⁸

Boston's religious leaders were not the sort to turn the other cheek. One of their supporters damned "this Impious and Abominable Courant" as a weekly libel sheet whose "main intention" was to "Vilify and Abuse the best Men we have, and especially the Principal Ministers of Religion in the Country."⁶⁹ Increase Mather added his condemnation and his lamentations for the degeneracy of his native land. "I can well remember," he declared, "when the Civil Government could have taken an effectual Course to suppress such a *Cursed Libel!*"⁷⁰ The most thorough rebuttal was a pamphlet inspired by Cotton Mather,⁷¹ the *Vindication of the Ministers of Boston*. The anonymous author lauded the clergy as worthy men seeking the best for their people and gave the pro-Mather version of the beginning of the whole controversy. He was chiefly concerned, however, with maintaining the ministers' leadership in all things:

If this *impious* & Satanic Custom [of attacking the clergy] prevail,

⁶⁷ *Courant*, Jan. 22, 1721/1722.

⁶⁸ *A Friendly Debate; or, a Dialogue between Rusticus and Academicus about the Late Performance of Cademicus* (Boston, 1722).

⁶⁹ *Gazette*, Jan. 15, 1721/1722.

⁷⁰ *Gazette*, Jan. 29, 1721/1722.

⁷¹ Kittredge, "Introduction," I. Mather, *Several Reasons*, 39-41.

we shall involve our selves into a thousand pernicious *Evils*. . . . Our *Reprovers* and *Prophets* being Silenced, *Iniquity* and every *Abomination* will break in among us, and bear down like an irresistible Torrent, all *Virtue*, and *Religion* before it. And what is mostly to be deprecated, all manner of *Spiritual Plagues* will follow this our degeneracy; and the *Town* grow ripe for a *Wrath unto the Uttermost*.⁷²

Inoculation had become a bitter party cause.

Reviewing the controversy, we must credit Cotton Mather and Boylston for their courage in experimenting with and continuing what seemed on fairly good evidence to be a means of saving life. But they cannot escape censure for their neglect of the rights of the community by their failure to take any steps to prevent those who were inoculated from transmitting the disease to others. Moreover, though Mather was not as credulous in this case as Douglass thought, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that he and Boylston were lucky that the experiment worked so well. On the other hand, Douglass' cautious approach toward an obviously dangerous medical innovation was a sane one. Unfortunately the vehemence of his opposition and his credulity in accepting Dalhonde's report becloud the positive values of his attitude. Furthermore, despite his expressed preference for cautious experiments, he himself would probably never have undertaken them.

⁷² *Vindication of Ministers*, 12.

BENJAMIN ROBBINS CURTIS:
JUDICIAL MISFIT

RICHARD H. LEACH

WHEN, in September, 1851, President Millard Fillmore appointed young Benjamin Robbins Curtis, of Boston, Massachusetts, to fill the place of the late Levi Woodbury on the United States Supreme Court, he expected, in his own words, to obtain "as long a lease and as much moral and judicial power as possible" from the appointment.¹ Considering what his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, had told him about Curtis, who was then but forty-one, and who was known for his "good health, excellent habits . . . industry and love of labor," and convinced as Webster was, that "in point of legal attainment and general character" Curtis was "in every way fit for the place,"² the President had every reason to believe his expectations would be fulfilled.

Certainly his nominee had all the usual qualifications for a Supreme Court seat—a sufficient heritage, an eminent legal position, and the proper political leanings. His family background and social position were impeccable: he had been born, in November, 1809, into one of the oldest families in Massachusetts, and educated at Harvard College; the incomparable George Ticknor was his uncle and intimate friend. Professionally, he had attained an enviable reputation. In the less than twenty years since he had left the tutelage of Joseph Story at the then newly refurbished Harvard Law School, Curtis had come to rival Rufus Choate for leadership of the New England bar. His powerful arguments were felt by many to be "unrivalled"³—as early as 1836, Story remarked on their "learning, research and ability" and declared them to be as

¹ Millard Fillmore to Daniel Webster, September 10, 1851, Daniel Webster Papers, Library of Congress.

² Daniel Webster to Millard Fillmore, September 10, 1851, Benjamin R. Curtis, Jr., *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.* (Boston, 1879), I, 154.

³ George S. Boutwell, *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in Public Affairs* (New York, 1902), I, 111.

"thorough and exact" as any he had ever heard;⁴ and much later, Charles Francis Adams, impressed by Curtis' "clearness of thought and precision of statement," concluded that their expositor was "the consummate master of forensic style among American lawyers of recent times."⁵ In over one hundred cases before the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, and in almost as many before the First Circuit Court of the United States in Boston, he had become skilled in virtually every type of law, arguing so many patent causes, indeed, that, along with Franklin Dexter, C. G. Loring, Benjamin Rand, and Willard Phillips, he was one of the first men in America to be known as a "patent attorney."⁶ In terms of clients represented and causes argued, few, if any, New England lawyers had acquired as wide a range of professional experience and as thorough a knowledge of both the principles and application of law in most of the areas involved in everyday litigation.

Moreover, Curtis had unequivocally taken the moderate Whig position that was so appealing to Fillmore. He had offered his support to the principle of compromise, to which the Whig party had pledged itself in the great debate of 1850, and he had publicly defended the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Act, a key measure of that compromise, in the very center of antislavery activities in New England. In the legislative session of the Massachusetts General Court in 1851, to which Curtis went as a member of the House of Representatives from Boston, he had led the Whig battle against the combined forces of the Democrat-Know-Nothing coalition with considerable success. Although he refused to consider himself as a party man, Curtis' services to the Whigs in the critical year of 1850-1851 had nevertheless been of value and importance, and among the members of the Boston bar, had been exceeded only by those of Choate.

⁴ Joseph Story to Ellis Gray Loring, November 5, 1836, W. W. Story, editor, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story* (Boston, 1852), II, 235.

⁵ Charles Francis Adams, *Richard Henry Dana* (Boston, 1891), II, 138.

⁶ Charles Warren, *A History of the American Bar* (Boston, 1911), 457.

Indeed, there was nothing in what Fillmore knew of Curtis to lead him to expect anything except that the new justice would serve long and faithfully and in such a way that he might, as he expressed it later, look back upon the appointment "as one of the most fortunate acts of [his] brief administration. . . ."⁷ Nor was the President forewarned of a different outcome either by public reception of the selection or by the record of Curtis' first years in office. Except for the radical antislavery press, which could hardly have welcomed a defender of the "detestable, Heaven-defying" Fugitive Slave Act⁸ to a seat on the bench, Curtis received the general acclaim of press and public. The *New-York Daily Times* was "gratified" to announce the appointment and noted that it would give "very general satisfaction,"⁹ while the *Boston Daily Advertiser* remarked grandiloquently, "To those who are acquainted with the elevated standing of Mr. Curtis among the members of the Bar of this Commonwealth, in all the qualifications for the high office to which he is appointed, and with the esteem in which he is held for his exemplary character in all the relations of private life, this appointment cannot fail to be most acceptable."¹⁰ *The Law Reporter*, like the President, was happy that Curtis had "consented to devote the rest of his days to dispensing justice on the highest tribunal in the world."¹¹

From the beginning, Curtis proved to be an able judge. His earliest actions seemed to testify to his "moral and judicial power," as Fillmore hoped they would. Even before he was formally nominated to the Senate in December, 1851, he presided with notable skill at the Circuit Court trial of Robert Morris, the first person to be indicted for violation of the new

⁷ Millard Fillmore to Benjamin R. Curtis, September 4, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁸ The words of Charles Sumner in reference to the Fugitive Slave Act. Elias Nason, *Life and Times of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1874), 200.

⁹ *New-York Daily Times*, September 23, 1851, 4.

¹⁰ *Boston Daily Advertiser*, September 22, 1851, 2.

¹¹ *The Law Reporter* 14: 332 (October, 1851).

Fugitive Slave Act. His refutation there of the assertions of Morris' attorney, John P. Hale, still stands as the most authoritative exposition ever written in the United States of the reasons why the bench, not the jury, must be the judge of the law in criminal cases.

"... I ... consider that [the] power and corresponding duty of the Court, authoritatively to declare the law, is one of the highest safeguards of the citizen," he declared. "The sole end of courts of justice is to enforce the laws uniformly and impartially, without respect to persons or times, or the opinions of men. To enforce popular laws is easy. But when an unpopular law is a just cause, when a law, unpopular in some localities, is to be enforced there, then comes the strain upon the administration of justice; and few unprejudiced men would hesitate as to where that strain would be most firmly borne."¹²

And once in Washington, Curtis' performances were equally impressive. As a contemporary observer put it, "We speak from report, but have reason to believe we speak truly, when we say that during the first term after his appointment, [Curtis] took rank with the first on the bench, for sureness of judgment, keenness of analysis and accuracy of legal research."¹³ His "great" opinion¹⁴ for the Court, that in *Cooley v. Port Wardens*,¹⁵ rendered during his very first term, settled a dispute which had plagued that august body since the days of Chief Justice Marshall, by providing a sound principle it might apply to the perplexing question of state power to regulate commerce. Curtis refused to accept the urgings of counsel that Congressional power over the subject was exclusive. He saw instead that the field of commerce was vast, "containing not only many, but exceedingly various subjects, quite un-

¹² *U. S. v. Robert Morris* 1 Curtis 23, 61 (October, 1851).

¹³ George N. Searle, "The Supreme Court of the United States in 1853-4," *American Law Register* 2: 707 (October, 1854).

¹⁴ Charles Fairman, *American Constitutional Decisions* (New York, 1950), 193.

¹⁵ *Aaron B. Cooley v. The Board of Wardens of the Port of Philadelphia* 12 Howard 299 (1851).

like in their nature. . . ." Some imperatively demanded "a single uniform rule," and that Congress must supply. But some "as imperatively demand[ed] that diversity which alone [could] meet the local necessities" of the case, and there state power must be permitted until Congress decreed otherwise.¹⁶ Only thus, he reasoned, could the subject of commerce receive its most competent handling; only thus could a sensible balance be struck between local circumstances and necessity on the one hand, and national interest and the need for uniformity on the other. His pragmatic formula has so well stood the test of time that Justice Hugo Black could recently write, without fear of contradiction that "The basic principles of the *Cooley* rule have been . . . the asserted grounds for determination of all commerce cases decided by this Court from 1852 until today."¹⁷ If, in other cases, Curtis' opinions attracted less public attention, all of them were recognized as "models of a correct style,"¹⁸ showing, as Curtis' colleague, John A. Campbell, wrote later, "elaboration, a mastery of facts, authorities, and arguments, and a skillful employment of precise and accurate statement and discussion."¹⁹ It is no mean praise of Curtis' work that not one of all the opinions he delivered for the Court has later been specifically overruled. Many have lost their meaning, and others have been modified or limited by later developments in the law, but a surprising number have today the force Curtis imparted to them one hundred years ago.

Not only did Curtis' performance in writing opinions win him early recognition, but his contributions to the conferences of the Court were at once recognized as valuable as well. There, behind closed doors, Curtis exerted a strong influence on his brethren. He "always came to the conference with full cognizance of the case, the pleadings, facts, questions, argu-

¹⁶ *Aaron B. Cooley v. The Board of Wardens* . . . , at 319.

¹⁷ *H. P. Hood and Sons, Inc. v. DuMond* 336 US 525, 545 (1948).

¹⁸ Remarks of Reverdy Johnson, 20 Wallace vi (1874).

¹⁹ Remarks of John A. Campbell, 20 Wallace viii (1874).

ments, authorities." He participated in the discussions, delivering his ideas in "compact, clear, searching" opinions, free "from all that was irrelevant, impertinent, or extrinsic." As a matter of course, Justice Campbell recalled, what Curtis said was weighty in the deliberations of the Court,²⁰ and it was the belief of several that "if in those days there had been a stenographer in the conference room to take down his language . . . his great reputation would have been founded not so much on his reported opinions" as on his remarks there.²¹

Thus, in all his judicial qualifications and activities, Curtis must have seemed to Fillmore, as he watched from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, to have been an excellent appointment indeed, and he no doubt felt, as he said he did, "proud satisfaction"²² in following Curtis' record on the bench. He must have been equally pleased by what he heard of Curtis' personal successes in Washington, for Curtis had made many friends there. John Sargent enjoyed his "simplicity, naturalness, and sincerity," while Attorney General John Crittenden was "perfectly charmed with him."²³ And not one of the members of the Court failed to like and admire his new colleague. Certainly to judge from all outward signs, the neophyte justice had settled down to a happy and fruitful career of judicial service.

Yet despite all the obvious indications of a pleasant and worthwhile life, Curtis was restless and ill at ease in his new post. Although he had not hesitated in accepting what seemed to him at the time the highest honor to be won in the legal profession, the position had quickly come to mean a little to him, and he had not been long on the bench before he began

²⁰ Remarks of John A. Campbell, 20 Wallace viii (1874).

²¹ Remarks of George Hoadley, *Proceedings of the Bench and Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States In Memoriam John Archibald Campbell* (Washington, 1889), 19. Justices Nelson, Grier, and Catron all expressed similar sentiments in writing to Curtis after his resignation.

²² Millard Fillmore to Benjamin R. Curtis, September 4, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

²³ Diary of John O. Sargent, quoted in Charles Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History* (Boston, 1922), II, 507.

to harbor a desire to forsake it and return to the bar. Very quickly he found judicial life to be an irritating one, and time was to lead him irresistibly toward the decision which, in the fall of 1857, was to shatter judicial precedent and leave him a marked man in the annals of judicial history. His motives were impugned at the time and have been questioned since. Some have accused him of desertion,²⁴ and others have held him guilty of "an act of revolution."²⁵ Even his brother, George Ticknor Curtis, felt that Curtis' resignation was a "'shadow' resting upon his fame."²⁶ Now almost one hundred years have elapsed since Curtis first announced his intention to resign, and in the perspective of a century it seems quite clear that such early judgments were wrong, and instead that Benjamin Robbins Curtis was miscast in his rôle from the beginning. The requirements of the office and his personal inclinations were at odds throughout his years of service, and the latter finally were victorious. Curtis' mistake was not so much in resigning, as many have alleged, but in accepting the post at the outset. How much unhappiness he would have been spared if he, like Rufus Choate, had realized at once that he was not temperamentally qualified to serve in a judicial capacity, and so had declined the honor!²⁷ But Curtis did not see that clearly and thus was destined to learn the truth from experience.

His difficulties arose on several scores. For one thing, he could not learn to accept with good grace the requirement that he be so much away from his home and family, either attending the sessions of the Supreme Court in Washington or presiding over the Circuit Courts in his New England districts. He tried for a term or two to take his wife and children to Washington with him, but it proved both very expensive and

²⁴ The accusation made by Robert C. Winthrop, quoted in Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., *A Memoir of Robert C. Winthrop* (Boston, 1897), 198.

²⁵ Otto Gresham, *The Dred Scott Case* (Chicago, 1908), 37.

²⁶ Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, I, 244.

²⁷ Claude M. Fuess, *Rufus Choate* (New York, 1928), 194; Joseph M. Neilson, *Memories of Rufus Choate* (Boston, 1884), 197, 349.

hard on them. Besides, he found it "neither congenial or useful" to subject them thus "to a kind of vagrant life in boarding-houses."²⁸ And so, more often, he passed the winter alone, living in a room somewhere near the Capitol. He never became reconciled to the idea of living thus, and it became increasingly hard for him to bear.²⁹ Nor did he appreciate the long journeys his circuit work entailed. It made him feel he led "the life of a wanderer," and it was a constant annoyance.³⁰

An even greater personal reason for his discontent as a member of the Court was a financial one. He had enjoyed an excellent income as a lawyer, and though he had not lived extravagantly, he had lived well, enjoying the conveniences and pleasures money would buy. "He . . . lived liberally," his brother recalled, "because his social position made it proper, and his numerous family rendered it necessary that he should do so."³¹ He had always liked to entertain, and he did not stint on the requirements of his growing family. He was, moreover, accustomed to do good works and make large contributions to charity, and he had earned enough at the bar to permit him to do all the things he wished. The purchase of a country home in the Berkshires just before his nomination to the Court, however, had severely strained Curtis' resources and made his need for a substantial income all the more imperative.

That his new position did not provide. The salary of an associate justice in 1851 was but \$4,500 a year, and though in 1855 it was raised by one-third, it did not begin even then to meet Curtis' demands. At once, he felt the difference and realized its inadequacy. In 1854, he noted that "the salaries are so poor that not one judge on the bench can live upon what the

²⁸ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 3, 1857, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 247.

²⁹ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, January 24, 1856, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 179.

³⁰ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 3, 1857, in Benjamin R. Curtis Papers.

³¹ Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 183.

government pays him."³² By 1857, he wrote that "The expenses of living have so largely increased, that I do not find it practicable to live on my salary . . . and, as my younger children will soon call for much increased expenses of education, I shall soon find it difficult to meet my expenses by my entire income." He was not able to live a single year after his appointment without dipping into his reserves, and he found it necessary to undertake the job of editing an edition of Supreme Court decisions in order to add thereby something to his means.³³ Even the greatest economies he could practice succeeded in producing only a way of living such as "neither my family or myself have ever been accustomed to," and forced him to live in a way he thought was not "consistent with the dignity of the office" he held.³⁴

Curtis' plight, of course, was not a solitary one. All the justices felt the sacrificial aspects of their office, and at least one member of the Senate felt that the members of the Court were "hampered in their private relations, with all the inconvenience and embarrassments of a deficient support," and referred to them as "needy and half paid men."³⁵ "What are we in social life without adequate means to live up to our positions and to give to our children the chance of doing so too, with the aid of something to begin life!" remarked Mr. Justice Wayne.³⁶ More and more Curtis asked himself the same question. But where the other justices resolved their dilemma in favor of public duty, and remained on the Court, Curtis' concern over his finances, and especially over the proper provision for his

³² Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, December 20, 1854, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 175.

³³ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 3, 1857, in Benjamin R. Curtis Papers.

³⁴ Quoted in Chandler Robbins, "Memoir of the Hon. Benjamin Robbins Curtis," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 16: 20 (January, 1878).

³⁵ George N. Badger, Senator from North Carolina, *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 2nd Session, 42 (December 13, 1854).

³⁶ James M. Wayne to Benjamin R. Curtis, September 21, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

children's future, led him to wonder if he could not somehow make an honorable retreat from his post, back to his more lucrative private practice.

Probably these crosses might have been borne by Curtis as well if he had been able to feel that the burden was worth the carrying. Increasingly, however, he doubted that it was. He was so much a successor to the older generation in his thinking about politics that he could neither understand nor appreciate the changes time brought in them. From the time he had opposed the combined forces of the Democrats and Know-Nothings in the Massachusetts legislature, he had been unhappy about the state of public affairs and had acquired a healthy dislike of what he saw abroad in the land and of the forces he held responsible for it. The Free Soilers, the abolitionists, the Know-Nothings seemed weak characters indeed to him, pale in comparison with the figures of the past. Nowhere among them did he see good men rising to meet the needs of the hour. Sumner he dismissed brusquely as "a person of no practical power, or ability, a declaimer, and rather sophomorical at that."³⁷ Of their other leaders, he felt much the same way. What faith he possessed he placed in the Democratic party, but even there he found little to please him. Writing in 1855, he wondered if it was not time for a change and for resistance to what he felt to be "the wrongful acts of the parties in power," or at least time "to make preparations to resist them . . . of the most solid and serious kind."³⁸ By then, it seemed to him that "The politics of parties are in a very confused state. . . . There are a few old Democrats who hold on to their traditions; but besides these almost all are looking over their shoulders on both sides to discern from what quarter the breeze is blowing. That the country is to go through a severe trial, and its institutions be hardly strained during the next few years, I have no doubt. If it depended on

³⁷ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, February 29, 1852, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁸ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, February 16, 1855, George Ticknor Collection, Dartmouth College Library.

the virtue and wisdom of its public men, I should not have so much hope as fear."³⁹

It was not that Curtis had lost his trust in the American governmental system itself. He insisted he had not. "The frame of the government is so good," he had written, "that it will work pretty well under great embarrassments, and will not stop without being first subjected to very violent shocks."⁴⁰ What worried him was that those embarrassments and shocks were already upon the country. Particularly did the increasing confusion in party circles and the daily more bitter and rancorous expressions of opinion in the press seem dangerous to him. He forgot that the same thing had happened before, and that the country had survived. Instead, when he looked "steadily at the condition of things, not in New England merely, but over the whole country," he found "nothing to rely on for our future security and peace but the honest instincts of the mass of the people." But even them he distrusted because of the possibility that they might be perverted by "politicians, or members of the third-estate,"⁴¹ for he was firmly convinced "that if the country for five years were to be effectively governed by politicians and editors, helped by speculative men of education and talent, it would be ruined beyond hope of redemption."⁴² His prolonged experience with the vituperation of partisan journalists as a result of the support he had extended to the Fugitive Slave Act on circuit only strengthened his conviction that, instead of earnestly working for improvement in public affairs, they were really concerned with aggravating things and adding to the reigning confusion. By the middle of his fifth year in Washington, he thought that the great difficulty in the nation was "the want of a steady, able,

³⁹ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, February 6, 1855, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 176.

⁴⁰ Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 176.

⁴¹ Curtis no doubt meant to refer to the fourth-estate, a common name for the press.

⁴² Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 13, 1852, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 186.

and enterprising conservative press. They are all desperate or timid."⁴³

Slowly, in the years after his appointment to the Court, Curtis' natural conservatism in politics turned into pessimism of the deepest kind, and the gap between his political outlook and that of the coming group of leaders in national affairs became steadily wider. Especially did the re-opening of the sores of the slavery controversy by the disputes over the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act drive a wedge between him and the Republicans just coming into power, and serve to convince him further that the Union was in danger. Gradually, he came to distrust all political actions and to deplore the din and violence of the political arena.

But it was to that arena that most of the country's knottiest problems were committed, at least until 1857, and the blackness of Curtis' mood deepened as he saw the only standard he recognized, the law, increasingly disregarded there by the press and the members of the Free Soil party. Displeased and dejected, he was not sure but what the Constitution itself might even "become useless" in his day.⁴⁴ He tried in vain to close his ears altogether to news from Massachusetts, so disgusted was he with affairs in his native Commonwealth. "I got so tired of Massachusetts opinions and action on all public affairs, before I came here," he wrote from Washington in the winter of 1857, "that I have scarcely desired to see a Boston newspaper."⁴⁵ The power Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, and Charles Sumner had attained there affronted his sensibilities and rekindled in him the old Federalist fear that the people were after all too easily misled to be safe in the hands of such skillful demagogues. The criticism and abuse they lavished upon him but added to his disgust. Perhaps more

⁴³ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, February 16, 1855, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁴ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 13, 1853, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁵ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, February 27, 1857, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, 1, 194.

than anything else, their hostility, so loudly trumpeted and so seldom rebutted, turned the taste for judicial life sour in his mouth. For he had been tutored to believe that the position of a judge entitled its occupant to immense respect, as a proper guardian of the Constitution and the law. When he found that such was not necessarily the case, it was a discovery that spoiled the job for him at once. It did not encourage him to know that for doing what he was bound to do, so great a man as Emerson would call him "inferior . . . without self-respect, without character. . . ." ⁴⁶ Even if, as his friend, Edwin Conant, believed, "No threat of a hydra-headed populace, or impending vengeance of a political tyrant, had any terrors for him," ⁴⁷ neither did they hold any pleasure for him. He was constantly bewildered that his actions should be so much attacked and maligned, and the pricks of disillusionment soon began to pierce the armor of his certainty. Within three years from the day he first went on the bench, he wondered if it was any longer worthwhile to hold his post. ⁴⁸

The factors pushing him toward resignation might not so soon have outweighed the counter-balancing satisfactions of Curtis' life between 1851 and 1857, however, had it not been that in its 1856 term the Court was confronted with a case, the aftermath of which snapped the remaining bonds of his patience and produced the action he had long been tempted to take. Even during the conference stage, the Dred Scott Case had frayed his temper and produced evidences of strain. Not only did the conclusions of the majority seem profoundly wrong to Curtis, but he was dismayed by what he considered to be their political nature. He so disapproved of his colleagues' venture outside the field of properly justiciable matters that he resolved to stand against them in dissent at the final count.

⁴⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Fugitive Slave Law," an address delivered in Concord, Mass., March 4, 1854, *The Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Modern Library edition (New York, 1940), 862.

⁴⁷ Edwin Conant to George W. Phillips, January 7, 1875, MSS. Records of the Class of 1829, Harvard University Archives.

⁴⁸ Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, December 20, 1854, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

His dissent was a sharply critical, point-by-point rebuttal of Taney's opinion for the Court. In it, he drew a sharp line of distinction between constitutional right and constitutional wrong and placed himself squarely on the side of the right. Only John McLean joined him in dissent.

Suddenly, the veneer of harmony which had overlaid his relationships with his brethren for six years was shattered. At once, Curtis was filled with apprehension about his future among men of such radically different (and erroneous) views. Although there was no overt evidence of personal "hostility or unkindness . . . to [him] by those who did not concur with him" in the case,⁴⁹ the future among such colleagues frightened Curtis so much that, the very evening of the day the case was concluded, he discussed the idea of resigning with his friend, Senator George N. Badger, of North Carolina, who advised him to "come to no hasty decision upon the matter" and gave voice to the hope that Curtis might "long live to grace the bench on which" he then had a seat.⁵⁰ Whether it was Badger's urgency, or merely because he had not yet reached a decision, Curtis left Washington the next day without giving any outward sign of impending change. But as the spring unfolded, he could not shake the feeling that *Dred Scott* was somehow different from any other case and that his dissent there had different implications from those he had previously rendered. The more he heard his position praised for its "vigor and ability,"⁵¹ and the more adulation it aroused in party circles, the more convinced he became of his own rectitude. And the more he heard his colleagues damned, the surer he became of their error. By July 3, he confided to George Ticknor that he no longer felt "that confidence in the court, and that willingness to cooperate with them, which are essential to the

⁴⁹ Remarks of John A. Campbell, 20 Wallace xi (1874).

⁵⁰ George E. Badger to Benjamin R. Curtis, March 8, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵¹ The reaction of John Appleton, a member of the Supreme Court of Maine, who thought the whole opinion "worthy of Marshall," was typical of the feelings expressed to Curtis. John Appleton to Benjamin R. Curtis, March 15, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

satisfactory discharge of my duties as a member of that body,"⁵² and it is probable that his resignation would soon have been forthcoming on that ground alone, without a further catalyst. The case had come to the Court when he was already restless and unhappy in his position, and it but filled the cup of his dissatisfaction. If his fears were conjured up out of nothing, they were nonetheless real to him, for he had not acquired the detachment to see them for what they were. Although he had long been the exponent of compromise and "the sensible solution," he became so much the victim of his own logic in this instance that he took an absolute position from which there was no retreat. He forgot what he had written only six years before—"the larger number [of cases] have elements of right and truth on both sides,"⁵³ and convinced of his own righteousness, had little patience with his brethren.

But it was not until there occurred a specific rupture of the surface quiet of his relations with his fellow justices that Curtis was finally led to resign. He had released his dissent to the press considerably before the majority opinions were ready, and in so doing brought down upon his shoulders the full volume of Chief Justice Taney's wrath. Taney assumed, and with justification, "that the early and widespread publication of Curtis' dissenting opinion had played a prominent part in the forming of public sentiment in the case,"⁵⁴ and since much of that sentiment in the North was unfavorable, not to say unfriendly, to the majority position, Taney quite naturally resented it. Although Curtis protested that his action had been inadvertent and not designed to reap party advantage, the Chief Justice was not convinced, and in a series of acrimonious letters to Curtis, written during the early summer of 1857, he made crystal clear his disapproval of Curtis' indiscre-

⁵² Benjamin R. Curtis to George Ticknor, July 3, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵³ Benjamin R. Curtis, Report on Procedure, quoted in Junius Hall, *The Act to Amend some of the Proceedings, Practice and Rules of Evidence of the Courts of this Commonwealth* . . . (Boston, 1851), 153.

⁵⁴ Carl B. Swisher, *Roger B. Taney* (New York, 1936), 514.

tion. Despite the latter's denials, it looked to Taney as if Curtis had acted intentionally: ". . . this in the first instance in the history of the Supreme Court," he wrote Curtis on June 11, "in which the assault [on the Court] was commenced by the publication of the opinion of a dissenting Judge; carrying with it the weight and influence of a judicial opinion delivered from the Bench in the presence and hearing of the Court."⁵⁵ Moreover, it had been delivered at a time when the air was filled with the prejudice and passion of political partisanship, and in such an atmosphere, Taney felt that no one could have failed to see that the public presentation of only one side of the Court's position on such all-engrossing topics as slavery and Congressional power in the territories would be of great advantage to one party or the other. He thought Curtis had by his action violated the canons of "judicial decorum and propriety,"⁵⁶ and nothing Curtis said in his defense in the three letters to his chief he wrote that summer succeeded in changing Taney's mind. As the summer ended, a draught of frigid air seemed to have settled over their relationship with no sign of relief in sight.

As Curtis contemplated this alteration in his erstwhile friendship with the Chief Justice, and added it to the already heavy burden of his other grievances against judicial life, it finally seemed too much for him to carry any longer. He could see less and less reason to return to Washington in December, and by late summer, he had decided to resign. Despite Mr. Justice McLean's warning that he would "feel a little awkward at the bar,"⁵⁷ Curtis resolved to return there, and on September 1, 1857, he penned a formal note of resignation to President Buchanan.⁵⁸ He offered only an inconsistency with his

⁵⁵ Roger B. Taney to Benjamin R. Curtis, June 11, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁶ Taney to Curtis, June 11, 1857, Benjamin R. Curtis Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁷ John McLean to Benjamin R. Curtis, July 30, 1857, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, I, 259.

⁵⁸ Benjamin R. Curtis to James Buchanan, September 1, 1857, Curtis, *A Memoir of Benjamin Robbins Curtis, LL.D.*, I, 249.

private duties in explanation and did not elaborate further. It mattered little what excuse he gave anyhow—the real reason for his action was the basic incompatibility between the demands and requirements of the post and Curtis' own set of values. He never put the thought into expression, and perhaps he never even framed the thought, but that it was operative from beginning to end of his career on the Court is clear today.

President Buchanan was very happy to accept Curtis' resignation, and within a month, he was once again back on the other side of the bar, where his heart had always been. The long lease President Fillmore had hoped to secure in 1851 ran out sooner than he had any right to expect, and those who had prophesied for Curtis a judicial rank next only to that of Marshall were forced to revise their estimates. Yet none needed to revise them too far downward, for despite the brevity of his tenure on the Court, Curtis more than adequately fulfilled the requirements for a high judicial reputation. It is interesting, however, to speculate as to what heights New England's fourth representative on the United States Supreme Court might have reached had he not been playing out of character. The pages of his life after 1857 are full of legal triumphs, and had he but possessed the proper temperament, or been able to evaluate things differently, they might well have been judicial triumphs instead. Even as it was, no one can seriously study the United States Reports and not feel "the impact of Curtis' qualities—short as was the term of his service,"⁵⁹ and that alone is a remarkable achievement for America's most notable judicial misfit.

⁵⁹ Justice Felix Frankfurter to author, September 22, 1949.

MEMORANDA AND DOCUMENTS

EMERSON AND BUONARROTI

FRANKLIN B. NEWMAN

THAT the work and writing of Michelangelo Buonarroti had particular appeal to Emerson should surprise no one when we consider the strong Neo-Platonic convictions of the former and the continual reading of the latter in such later Platonists as Porphyry, Jamblichus, Proclus, and Plotinus. Emerson's interest in Michelangelo and his subtle understanding of his philosophy, however, were greater than most readers realize. Reference to the "hand that rounded Peter's dome" involved more than mere allusion.

Emerson's admiration for Michelangelo had developed as early as 1835 when he was lecturing in Boston on the Florentine master. Entries in his *Journals* for December, 1834, and January, 1835, read as follows:

Michel Angelo Buonarotti: John Milton: Martin Luther: George Fox: Lafayette: Falkland, Hampden. Are not these names seeds? "Men akin unto the Universe."¹

Last night, abed, I recollected four names for four lectures: Luther, Michelangelo, Milton, George Fox. . . .²

I am writing my lecture of Michel Angelo, clothed with a coat which was made for me in Florence: I would I were clothed with the spirit of beauty which breathed life into Italian art.³

Always one to seek the key figures that had made the history of man what it was, Emerson had discovered in Michelangelo a representative of the powerful individual force that was man at his best. Because his works and his life agreed in integrity of purpose, he was to be venerated for his moral fame.

Even before this novitiate series of lectures, the *Journals* covering Emerson's first trip to Europe disclose appreciation of Michelangelo. No grand tour of Italy, of course, could overlook him, but his influence was, perhaps, greater than the explicit statements

¹ Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, editors, *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York, 1909), III, 351. The various spellings of Michelangelo's name are as Emerson wrote them.

² *Journals*, III, 386.

³ *Journals*, III, 394.

in the *Journals* declare. Emerson had gone abroad adhering to Alison's proposition that the beauty of a work of art had to be in the mind of the beholder.⁴ He returned from Europe ready to accept an aesthetic theory that assigned the source of all beautiful forms to the absolute. The two theories do not exclude one another. But the chronology of their occurrence in the *Journals* is indicative of a shift in emphasis in Emerson's thinking about art. After his trip abroad his speculations are of a more metaphysical nature. It seems likely that Michelangelo contributed to this development in Emerson's thought. The similarity of the new view of art and beauty with the philosophy of the Florentine and the continued devotion to the writings of Michelangelo after his return to Concord both suggest this possibility. However, it must not be thought that Michelangelo was the only influence at work on Emerson at this point in his career,⁵ and for our purposes it is sufficient to note that even before the lectures Emerson reveals a profound interest in the work of the Italian master.

Concerning the perceptiveness of Emerson's particular aesthetic judgments on his trip there has been much adverse comment. John Jay Chapman, for instance, alleges that Emerson before he has uttered three sentences reveals that "he does not know what art is."⁶ He even goes further to suggest that

In fact, Emerson has never in his life felt the normal appeal of any painting, or any sculpture, or any architecture, or any music.⁷

Later critics, parroting this line of thinking, have acquiesced. Gohdes, for example, has found that though Emerson had not a spurious interest in art, he had little appreciation for the plastic.⁸

⁴ *Journals*, I, 304. The reference is to Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (Edinburgh, 1811).

⁵ Miss Vivian C. Hopkins, for example, has suggested that it was Goethe's influence that was predominant on Emerson's thinking about art and the creative consciousness at this point in his career. (See Vivian C. Hopkins, "The Influence of Goethe on Emerson's Aesthetic Theory," *PQ*, XXVII, 325-344 (October, 1948). However, she also points out that Emerson was particularly interested in Goethe's references to Plotinus and Michelangelo as well as in Goethe's *Urpflanze* theory; and it is safe to say that a mind as eclectic as Emerson's was under the spell of no single thinker. Other influences besides those mentioned here were undoubtedly at work.

⁶ John Jay Chapman, *Emerson and Other Essays* (New York, 1908), 44.

⁷ *Emerson and Other Essays*, 45.

⁸ Clarence Gohdes, "A Gossip on Emerson's Treatment of Beauty," *Open Court*, XLV, 316 (1931).

He goes on in his article to find Emerson's European criticism at least partially inadequate. Grace F. Shepherd agrees. "No real appreciation of art in any form,"⁹ she says. Finally, MacRae has noted that Emerson seems kindled by no painter whom he encountered on his first trip to Italy before Michelangelo;¹⁰ moreover, since he held that sculpture is superior to painting, it is surprising that nowhere does he write of Michelangelo's sculpture.¹¹ MacRae also notes that the essay on Michelangelo gives the most meager information and might better have been written by Margaret Fuller.¹² He feels that we are justified in our disappointment at finding so little aesthetic opinion in an essay that was presumably to deal with an aesthetic subject.¹³

Are these comments and judgments fair? Has Emerson shown himself blind to the merit of the great works that he saw in Italy? MacRae himself concedes that Emerson makes a real offering to his favorite artist¹⁴ when he writes of Michelangelo:

The genius of Michel aims at Strength in all figures, not in gods and prophets alone, but in women and in children; a divine Strength, titanic, aboriginal before the world was; a strength anterior to all disease. . . .

Michel esteemed the human form the best ornament, and so uses no other in each cornice or compartment, only a new and wondrous attitude of sleep or energy.¹⁵

And if we can read him sympathetically at this point (I realize that MacRae would not encourage us to be too indulgent), why not when he writes in his *Journals*:

I shall, I think, remember few sculptures better when I get back into my chimney corner than the beautiful head of the Justice who sits with Prudence on the monument of Paulus III, on the left of the Tribuna in St. Peter's. It was designed by Michel Angelo, executed by William de la Porta; but where in the universe is the archetype from which the artist drew this sweetness and grace? There is a heaven.¹⁶

⁹ Grace F. Shepherd, "Emerson's Attitude Toward the Fine Arts," *Education*, LV, 224 (1934).

¹⁰ Donald MacRae, "Emerson and the Arts," *The Art Bulletin*, xx, 80 (1938).

¹¹ MacRae, "Emerson and the Arts," 83.

¹² MacRae, "Emerson and the Arts," 82.

¹³ MacRae, "Emerson and the Arts," 82.

¹⁴ MacRae, "Emerson and the Arts," 83.

¹⁵ *Journals*, v, 299.

¹⁶ *Journals*, III, 94.

I went this afternoon to see Michel Angelo's statue of Moses, at the church of San Pietro in Vinculo, and it is grand. It seems he sought to embody the Law in a man. Directly under the statue, at the side when the whole face is seen, the expression is terrible. I could wish away those emblematic horns. "Alzati, parla!" said the enthusiastic sculptor.¹⁷

These comments are those of one who, perceiving a quality of beauty beyond any that could be matched in the physical world alone, turned naturally to the transcendental as the source of the grace and loveliness that he felt. They are not the outbursts of one who "does not know what art is" and who "has never in his life felt the normal appeal of any painting, or any sculpture." They are convincing testimony of his sensitiveness to what he considered superior artistic performance. Both comments are, incidentally, about Michelangelo's sculpture despite MacRae's impression that he contradicted himself in the entries that found their way into his *Journals* while he was in Italy by not recording any impressions about the sculpture of his favorite artist.

Emerson's knowledge of Michelangelo, however, far exceeded casual impressions derived from the months he spent in Italy. The lecture and the subsequent *Journals* attest to the deep impression Michelangelo had made upon him. Indeed, hardly had he returned to Concord before he was borrowing books from the Harvard Library and quoting Michelangelo in the *Journals*:

We can all put out our hands towards the desired truth, but few can bring their hands to meet around it. He alone is an artist whose hands can perfectly execute what his mind has perfectly conceived;—*Solo a quello arriva La man che obbedisce all' intelletto.*
—Michel Angelo¹⁸

A translation of Michelangelo's Sonnet VII appears on the same page as the above snatch of Italian. And not only did he show an immediate interest in Michelangelo's poetry, but hardly a year was to go by in which he was not either re-reading Michelangelo or commenting upon him in the *Journals*. Sonnet III, for example, was translated in the *Journal* for April, 1864; Madrigals LI and LIH in the *Journal* for 1859. Michelangelo's *Sonnets* are mentioned in the reading lists for 1834, 1838, 1839, 1842, 1849, 1859, 1864, and 1865. References to Michelangelo himself also occur frequently.

¹⁷ *Journals*, III, 99.

¹⁸ *Journals*, III, 400.

What had Michelangelo to say that appealed to Emerson? From the early lecture on Michel Angelo we might guess at first glance almost nothing. The essay seems singularly lacking in critical discussion. Indeed, Emerson felt the same way about it, writing John Chapman on October 30, 1846, that he would rather not have it printed with his name.¹⁹ But on further examination the few short critical passages establish beyond a doubt the fact that Emerson had already accepted an aesthetic akin to Michelangelo's. He writes in the lecture, basing part of his case on Gustave Moritz:

"What other standard of the beautiful exists, than the entire circuit of all harmonious proportions of the great system of nature? All particular beauties scattered up and down in nature are only so far beautiful, as they suggest more or less in themselves this entire circuit of harmonious proportions." [Moritz] This great Whole, the understanding cannot embrace. Beauty may be felt. It may be produced. But it cannot be defined.

The Italian artists sanction this view of beauty by describing it as *il più nell' uno*, "the many in one," or multitude in unity, intimating that what is truly beautiful seems related to all nature. A beautiful person has a kind of universality, and appears to have truer conformity to all pleasing objects in external nature than another. Every great work of art seems to take up into itself the excellencies of all works, and to present, as it were, a miniature of nature.²⁰

Here Emerson has already connected Michelangelo's thoughts on art and beauty with those he was welding together from various sources. The statement, "All particular beauties . . . are only so far beautiful, as they suggest . . . this entire circuit of harmonious proportions," is, of course, an almost exact prose statement of the meaning of Emerson's "Each and All" and occurs four or five years before that poem. And the later passage in the lecture, devoted more particularly to Michelangelo and his aims, establishes still further the nature of the message that the youthful Emerson was reading in his Italian master. He warns concerning Michelangelo:

But let no man suppose that the images which his spirit worshipped were mere transcripts of external grace, or that this profound soul was taken or holden in the chains of superficial beauty. To him,

¹⁹ Ralph L. Rusk, editor, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1939), III, 358-359.

²⁰ "Michael Angelo," *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York, 1904), XII, 217-218.

of all men, it was transparent. Through it he beheld the eternal spiritual beauty which ever clothes itself with grand and graceful outlines, as its appropriate form. He called eternal grace "the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has called into Time." "As from the fire, heat cannot be divided, no more can beauty from the eternal." He was conscious in his efforts of higher aims than to address the eye. He sought, through the eye, to reach the soul. Therefore, as, in the first place, he sought to approach the Beautiful by the study of the True, so he failed not to make the next step of progress, and to seek Beauty in its highest form, that of Goodness.²¹

The two sonnets by Michelangelo from which Emerson has taken his two quotations in this passage are Sonnets LI and VI respectively, and show clearly in their wide separation in Emerson's copy of the *Rime* the extent to which he had ranged through Michelangelo's works even before the lecture.

The arguments of these two poems in their totality would have great appeal to one of Emerson's moral purpose. The former in a fine religious fervor praises God who inflames only with divine love.

Io te chiamo, signor, te solo invoco,
 Contro l'inutil mio cieco tormento;
 Tu mi rinnuova in sen col pentimento
 Le voglie, e 'l senno, e 'l valor ch' è sì poco.

Tu desti al tempo l'anima ch' è diva,
 E in questa spoglia, sì fragile e stanca,
 La incarcerasti e desti al suo destino.

Tu la nutri e sostieni, e tu l'avviva:
 Ogni ben senza te, signor, le manca:
 La sua salute è sol poter divino.²²

The latter stresses the heavenly origin of love and beauty, a fine representation of Michelangelo's Neo-Platonic Christianity.

La vita del mio amor non è 'l cuor mio;
 Che l'amor di ch'io t'amo è senza cuore,
 Là volto oye mortal pieno d'errore
 Affetto esser non può, nè pensier rio.

Amor nel dipartir l'alma da Dio
 Occhio sano me fece, e te splendore,
 Nè sa non rivederlo in quel che muore
 Di te per nostro mal, mio gran desio.

²¹ "Michael Angelo," *Works*, XII, 233-234.

²² G. Biagioli, editor, *Rime di Michelagnolo Buonarroti* (Parigi, 1821), 118.

Come dal fuoco il caldo, esser diviso
 Non può 'l bel dall' eterno; e la mia stima
 Esalta chi ne scende, e chi 'l somiglia.

Veggendo ne' tuo' occhi il paradiso,
 Per ritornar là dove io t'amai prima,
 Ricorro ardendo sotto le tue ciglia.²³

Further, if we look at the sonnets that Emerson translated and left recorded in his *Journals* (one of which was printed in *May-Day and Other Pieces*) we find that he missed few of the main points of Michelangelo's thought. For example, in the *Journal* for December 21, 1834, both Sonnets I and VII occur. Sonnet VII, which is rendered in prose translation, relates the old Platonic and Neo-Platonic conception of the soul's coming from a previous home, a concept with which Emerson, of course, was already familiar from his reading of Wordsworth and of Plato directly.

I know not if it is the light of its first maker impressed on the imagination, which the soul perceives, or if from the memory, or from the mind, any other beauty shines through into the heart; or if in the soul yet beams and glows the bright ray of its primitive state, leaving of itself I know not what burning, which is perhaps that which guides me, and it seems to me that another shows it to me. This, lady, happened to me when I first saw you, that a bitter-sweet, a Yes and No, moved me; (certainly it must be your eyes).²⁴

Sonnet I is referred to in the two-line quotation previously cited on page 527 above. Emerson paraphrases these lines: "He alone is

²³ *Rime di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, 6.

²⁴ *Journals*, III, 400. It is, perhaps, unfair to Emerson to condemn so literal an effort, particularly since it is clearly the work of one not highly skilled at the language; however, compare the splendor and fullness of the original.

Non so se e' s'è l'immaginata luce
 Del suo primo fattor, che l'alma sente,
 O se dalla memoria o dalla mente
 Alcuna altra beltà nel cuor traluce;
 O se nell' alma ancor risplende e luce
 Del suo primiero stato il raggio ardente,
 Di se lasciando un non so che cocente,
 Ch'è forse quel ch'a pianger mi conduce.
 Quel ch'io sento e ch'io veggio, e chi mi guidi
 Meco non è, nè so ben veder dove
 Trovar mel possa, e par ch'altri me'l mostri.
 Questo, donna, m'avvien poi ch'io vi vidi,
 Ch'un dolce amaro, un sì e no mi muove;
 Certo saranno stati gli occhi vostri.

—Biagioli, *Rime*, p. 7.

an artist whose hands can perfectly execute what his mind has perfectly conceived." Later this sonnet appears in poetic translation as follows:

Sonnet of Michel Angelo Buonarotti

Never did sculptor's dream unfold
 A form which marble doth not hold
 In its white block; yet it therein shall find
 Only the hand serene and bold
 Which still obeys the mind.
 So hide in thee, thou heavenly dame,
 The ill I shun, the good I claim;
 I alas! not well alive,
 Miss the aim whereto I strive.
 Not love, nor beauty's pride,
 Nor Fortune, nor thy coldness, can I chide,
 If, whilst within thy heart abide
 Both death and pity, my unequal skill
 Fails of the life, but draws the death and ill.²⁵

It can be argued that the rendition is almost doggerel. Unfortunately Emerson was not so able a translator as Rossetti and Symonds. But, on the other hand, it cannot be argued that Emerson is not plunging to the heart of Michelangelo's *Sonnets*, culling out in his *Journals* the poems that add best to Michelangelo's core of thought. The notion that any sculpture is limited by the form implicit in the material as well as by the conception in the artist's mind is central to Michelangelo's Neo-Platonic thought. The artist's original conception is divinely inspired; this form he then attempts to realize in stone. But the stone itself has an ultimate form which limits the artist's and which is also divinely derived. In both cases the realizable forms are but poor imitations of pure form.

In 1859 occur in the *Journals* his translations of the Madrigals LI and LII, which strike the penitential note rather than the Platonic. Whether they represent the direct stimulus for Emerson's poem "Days," or not, is indeterminate. "Days" was first published in the *Atlantic* in 1857; but it is probable that Emerson in the

²⁵ *Works*, IX, 299. Here again, perhaps, it is desirable that we see Michelangelo's words in the crucial first stanza. There is a cleanness and firmness of line in the original that the translator does not touch.

Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto,
 Ch'un marmo solo in se non circoscriva
 Col suo soverchio, e solo a quello arriva
 La man che obbedisce all' intelletto.

Finally, as late as April 24, 1864, Emerson translates and inserts in the *Journal* Michelangelo's third sonnet. Here the traditional Platonic hierarchy of beauty plays its part.

Michael Angelo's Third Sonnet

The power of a beautiful face lifts me to Heaven,
 Since else in earth is none that delights me,
 And I mount living among the elect souls,—
 A grace which seldom falls to a mortal.
 So well with its Maker the work consents,
 That I rise to him through divine conceptions,
 And here I shape all thoughts and words,
 Burning, loving, through this gentle form:

Whence, if ever from two beautiful eyes
 I know not how to turn my look, I know in them
 The light which shows me the way which guides me to God.
 And if, kindled at their light, I burn,
 In my noble flame sweetly shines
 The eternal joy which smiles in Heaven.²⁸

²⁸ *Journals*, x, 35-36. This sonnet, in Biagioli, p. 3, is the famous one beginning, "La forza d'un bel volto al ciel mi sprona. . . ." Signor Radici in his article in *The Retrospective Review* had called it Michelangelo's most beautiful poem.

Sonnets that reinforce these Platonic and Neo-Platonic conceptions but which were not translated in the *Journals* or mentioned by Emerson are Sonnet XLV, where Michelangelo suggests that all the lovely things on earth resemble the divine source of bliss that gave them birth,

A quel pietoso fonte, onde siam tutti
 S'assembra ogni beltà che quà si vede
 Più ch'altra cosa dalle menti accorte,
 —Biagioli, p. 101.

Sonnet xxxi to Dante, where Michelangelo gives noteworthy expression to the idea that the great poet's soul descended from heaven and while here contemplated God to show the true light to the rest of us, Sonnet XLIV, where Michelangelo asserts that God is not revealed anywhere more clearly than in the human form,

Nè Dio se stesso manifesta altrove
 Più che in alcun leggiadro mortal velo,
 Dov' occhio sano in sua virtù si specchi,
 —Biagioli, p. 100.

and Sonnet xi, where beauty is asserted as transfigured by the soul, which confers a divinity of its own on the beauty of the body,

Quivi si fa divina, onesta, e bella,
 Come a se simil vuol cosa immortale;
 Questa, e non quella, agli occhi tuoi precorre.
 —Biagioli, p. 16.

Thus we find that not only did Michelangelo have much to say to Emerson but also that Emerson gives evidence of having been continually impressed by what Michelangelo said.

From the point of view of artistic application the culmination of the influence of Michelangelo on Emerson occurs in "The Problem." Here Emerson not only subscribes to Michelangelo's doctrine of the divine inspiration of the artist, but he also associates Michelangelo directly with the doctrine by illustrating it in operation in terms of Michelangelo's own life. He writes of the creative process:

Not from a vain or shallow thought
His awful Jove young Phidias brought, . . .

and then goes on directly to Michelangelo:

The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Finally, in the concluding stanza, Emerson gives the theory a more universal application in connection with the Parthenon, the pyramids, and man's other architectural accomplishments:

These temples grew as grows the grass;
Art might obey, but not surpass.
The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned;
And the same power that reared the shrine
Bestrode the tribes that knelt within.

The extent to which Michelangelo's influence enters this poem goes even further than the "sad sincerity" of the artist and the bond with God, both of which ideas are accountable for in the sonnets that found their way into the *Journals*. Even unquoted Sonnet LVII has a possible contribution to make to the poem. It explicitly calls the artistic conception "whole and divine,"²⁹ epithets which may well have had a strong influence on Emerson here, and goes on to add that the sculptor releases the promise of the hammer from "living" stone. The parallel with Emerson's use of the word "conscious" seems too striking to be a mere coincidence.

²⁹ *Rime di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, 124.

Thus Michelangelo plays an integral rôle in one of Emerson's most successful creative efforts as well as in the *Journals* and the essays. The poem attests to Emerson's facility in making his magnificently broad reading contribute to his own doctrine and his own artistic consciousness. But above that, it also attests to the esteem in which Emerson held Michelangelo and his message. Not all influences on his philosophy were so freely assimilated into his art. Michelangelo, however, has in the present case contributed vitally to an important poem. No critic who seeks truly to evaluate the texture of Emerson's thought dare overlook the ramifications of this fact. Emerson's reference to the "hand that rounded Peter's dome" involves more than the mere allusion.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island: 1640-1915.

By Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1952. Pp. xiii, 241. Pls. 230. Maps. \$18.50.)

There are a great many books by now on the old buildings of single places in America, and it is surprising that Newport has not had one before. The present one is worth waiting for—one of the best. It is sponsored by The Preservation Society of Newport County. Mrs. Michael M. van Beuren and Archbold van Beuren gave generous support to the publication, for which Maxim Karolik, who writes the Foreword, stood midwife. Several organizations gave financial subsidy to the researches.

It is essentially two books in one. The Introduction and Parts One to Three through the Greek Revival, as well as Appendix A, Detailed Histories and Descriptions of Buildings, are the work of Mrs. Downing; Part Four, Nineteenth Century Resort Architecture, is by Mr. Scully of the Yale University faculty; Appendix B, The Clarke Street Restoration, is by Philip D. Creer, A.I.A., of the faculty of Rhode Island School of Design. Mrs. Downing's list of credits is very imposing. The work is thus highly authentic. It has been handsomely produced, with interesting old headpieces. A stout quarto, it weighs over six pounds, so it is no book to read in bed, but very few architectural books are.

Mrs. Downing's introduction well states Newport's claim to architectural attention. Nine early public buildings have survived, three by Richard Munday, three by Peter Harrison, one by Asher Benjamin. Of eleven hundred dwellings standing at the beginning of the Revolution, three hundred of which were destroyed during the British occupation, over three hundred still stand with another hundred from before 1840. Row upon row of small dwellings, mostly of the eighteenth century, give Newport its unique character as a colonial town. There are many of the houses of the "Quaker Grandees" of this period. The buildings of the summer colony in the second half of the nineteenth century make another unique distinction, for the study of domestic architecture.

Mrs. Downing's three parts deal with Seventeenth Century Colonial, Eighteenth Century Colonial, and Early Republican Ar-

chitecture. The historical background is well covered by the first chapter of each, devoted respectively to Early Settlement, Society and Commerce, Commerce and Building. These are adequate and well documented.

There follow these, in each part, the studies of buildings, both surviving and destroyed. For these studies, the deed and survey records have been extensively used, as have old maps, cuts and photographs, as well as the drawings published in the *American Architect* and its offshoot, the *Georgian Period*. The earlier literature is exhaustively cited. Little if anything which one might hope to find mentioned or shown in this book has not been laid under contribution.

Of early buildings in the "Gothic Town," ten, including the Quaker Meeting House of 1700, survive from the seventeenth century. Following W. S. Godfrey's decisive excavations of 1948-1949, the Stone Mill is properly counted among them.

The time when old Newport chiefly flourished was the eighteenth century, which receives in all four chapters, through the Revolution, the very competent treatment which the period from the Revolution to 1840 receives in two others. The well-known pre-Revolutionary buildings are given their full due, with considerable additional new information; those of the Greek Revival, few and less well known, are adequately presented.

The Detailed Histories and Descriptions of individual buildings have a Supplement: Key to Map, eighteen pages of small type, covering, street by street, most houses built before 1830, and located on a folding map. The research which went into these, with their critique of modifications is very extensive.

The most novel portion of the book, generically, is Mr. Scully's, whose *New American Architecture of the Nineteenth Century: The Cottage Style of the Eastern Seaboard* will soon be published. That cottage style was nowhere more prominent than at Newport, where important contributions were made to it, especially by Henry Hobson Richardson, Stanford White, and Charles Follen McKim. The earliest works of romantic eclecticism shown are two by Richard Upjohn: Kingscote, 1841, of the Gothic Revival, and the Edward King house, 1845-1847, an "Italian villa," and one by Alexander Jackson Davis: Malbone, 1848-1849, a "baronial" house. These might have stood anywhere in America at that time, as might Calvert Vaux's Daniel Parrish house, 1855. Then the fun

begins. Of course there were "chalets" elsewhere—indeed, Andrew Jackson Downing's published "Cottage in the bracketed style," 1844, was little else—but Leopold Eidlitz' "The Chalet," 1854, begins to have a resort physiognomy which persists through many mutations of eclectic style. Like the second Ocean House hotel of 1845, and, still more, Upjohn's Hamilton Hoppin house of 1856, it has the articulated and vertical character which forms part of what Mr. Scully calls the "Stick Style." Other features he finds in it are free, asymmetrical interior space and exterior massing, as freely developed architectural organization.

We have been waiting for some analysis of romantic eclecticism, European, English, and American, which would point out an underlying unity of form. I am far from feeling that Mr. Scully has fully succeeded in this, or even in his attempt, less ambitious, to find, in the form of the buildings he discusses, a unity which is characteristically American. Mr. Scully uses terms which were developed in the analysis of the baroque and of mannerism: plastic, dense, volumes. One early house is "dense as if pushed in upon itself by massive forces and squeezing energy within its cube." In a later one "the mass leaps up as if impelled by the vertical energy of its studs." It is hard to see, however, how even this "full bloom stick baroque" is distinctively American, when the chalet had been an "arch-manifestation in Europe of a similar preoccupation," when "it is probable that Hunt's inspiration for this kind of design in wood came mainly from European examples of 'rustic' architecture," when Eastlake's interiors were known, and when many buildings of the important Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 were of this type—notably, we may say, the British buildings which he elsewhere mentions.

Similar problems arise in connection with the "Shingle Style." Here, as Mr. Scully realizes, there was a great influence from the English Norman Shaw, both in interior treatment verging into the "Queen Anne," and in the living-hall plan. Mr. Scully is well aware of the complexity of the elements: "on the one hand of a vital tradition of experiment and growth and on the other of indications of a growing antiquarianism." We may agree that "in a brief period of a little more than ten years, all the forces in American nineteenth-century domestic architecture, fusing with certain new forces and ideas, came together in the east and produced a domestic architecture of great vitality, originality, and quality."

These words certainly well apply to such buildings in Newport as Richardson's Andrews house, 1872, and (with White) Watts Sherman house, 1875, White's Kingscote, 1880-1881, McKim, Mead and White's Casino of that year, and their Robert Goelet house, 1882-1883, as well as Hunt's Indian Spring, 1891. All these houses had asymmetric plans, with wings projecting freely into the landscape. By the time of McKim, Mead and White's Edgar and H. A. C. Taylor houses, 1885-1886, symmetry tended to regain domination, as it does, in spite of some major departures, in the Edmund Morgan house of 1890-1891, when McKim's neo-classicism was already established. There remain, after this, little beside Hunt's châteaux of the 'nineties, Ochre Court, Marble House, Belcourt, and The Breakers, when any creative initiative had been lost.

The illustration is excellent throughout, with nearly four hundred figures, including plans, detail drawings, and photographs, of which many are wholly new.

FISKE KIMBALL.

The Truth About the Pilgrims. By Col. Francis R. Stoddard. (New York: Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of New York, 1952. Pp. xiii, 206.)

This is an excellent and factual little book by a distinguished member of the New York bar, himself a descendant of many of the *Mayflower* passengers, and an ardent admirer of the brave and resolute men who founded the Plymouth Colony and contributed by their trials and sufferings to laying the foundations of the free institutions which we have enjoyed. Colonel Stoddard has been moved to wrath by recently published smears, half-truths and downright lies concerning the Pilgrims. He has done an admirable job.

In a succinct account, the author has placed the salient facts regarding the Plymouth Colony before the lay reader in simple language. The book is not, properly speaking, a history of the Plymouth Plantation but rather a series of factual notes upon various phases of Pilgrim history, from which their true place in the formation of this country may be deduced. It will, however, be of use to the historian, since it brings together in one place many scattered facts. The list of principal events and his history of the development of Thanksgiving Day are good examples. His account of eighteenth-century Plymouth cannot fail to be valuable to the

general historian, relating, as it does, to matters not generally known except to local historians. The facts, carefully gathered, are supported by full citations of authorities and there is an excellent bibliography, which virtually covers the whole range of Pilgrim literature.

One is gratified to see a true account of the Merrymount incident and an accurate evaluation of that witty and likable rascal Thomas Morton, whose career, if it had not been checked, would have caused serious harm to all colonial venture in New England. It is to be observed that the non-Puritan, William Jeffrey, one of Sir Ferdinando Gorges' agents, living as far away as the present Manchester, Massachusetts, contributed to the abatement of the Merrymount gang. In view of the recent opera, depicting Tom Morton as persecuted by "sour fanatics," this account is timely. Another fiction, which this reviewer was pleased to see demolished, is the story that the earliest houses at Plymouth were the well-known log houses of the Western frontier. Still another fabrication happily exposed is the myth that the Pilgrims were Communitists, because there was at Plymouth, as at the foundation of Jamestown, a community of property. In both colonies it proved utterly unworkable and Bradford's remarks upon it prove how false this bit of propaganda is.

Unfortunately, the author's extreme adoration of the Plymouth settlers has frequently led him to conclusions which the facts hardly warrant. For instance, he states that "their tolerance was an example for Roger Williams." Now nobody will deny the greater tolerance and humanitarianism of the Pilgrim Colony, in comparison with their neighbors to the north at the Bay, and one must admit that the conduct of the early Quakers in New England left much to be desired. However, the life of the Quakers and peaceful Baptists under such governors as Thomas Prence was far from happy. So excellent a citizen as John Cooke, himself a *Mayflower* passenger, who had been a deputy from Plymouth and a deacon of the Plymouth Church, when he embraced the Baptist views, was forced to leave Plymouth and settle in the frontier town of Dartmouth. Roger Williams, no lover of the Quakers, as anyone who has read "G. Fox Digg'd Out Of His Burrows" knows, steadfastly refused to allow these forerunners of our Jehovah's Witnesses to be molested.

Colonel Stoddard's statement that Plymouth "originated local

self-government" is somewhat extreme. Local self-government was brought to the various colonies from England and harked back to the manor courts of the mother country. It is certainly an exaggeration to say that "Plymouth was the first successful settlement in any part of what later became the thirteen colonies." When the *Mayflower* sailed, Virginia was certainly a going concern with its House of Burgesses established the year before. The claim that the Plymouth free school of 1672 "was, perhaps the first free school ordained by law in New England" may well be questioned. How about the Boston and the Roxbury Latin Schools? And Harvard had long been established as an institution of higher learning. The statement that the union of Plymouth with Massachusetts brought about the end of bigotry and superstition at the Bay is hardly to be sustained. The religious fervor of the early years of the seventeenth century was dying out in both Old and New England. From the beginning, Plymouth, poorer and without the powerful friends at home, who had supported her domineering neighbor to the north, had exercised comparatively little influence on Massachusetts. However, these are perhaps minor matters.

Colonel Stoddard is justly exercised by the fact that many writers stress the humble position of the Plymouth colonists. An examination of the social status of the Plymouth settlers has convinced this reviewer that, generally speaking, the Plymouth people were drawn from about the same classes as those at the Bay. They were a cross section of the English middle classes of the day. The Elizabethan Englishman was no leveller, and he entrusted government to those qualified to administer it, with excellent results. The leaders in both colonies consisted of a comparatively small group, drawn from the gentle, educated, and well-to-do mercantile classes, while the rank and file consisted of well-to-do yeomen, artisans, and small tradesmen. Such men as Winslow, Standish, and the Mores sprang from old landed families. Brewster, a graduate of Cambridge and secretary to the Under Secretary Davidson, was certainly a "worshipful gentleman" in the nomenclature of the day. Bradford sprang from an old family of the best class of the yeomanry, and Dr. Fuller, a learned physician, also sprang from excellent yeomen stock in Norfolk. Such merchants as Allerton and Warren were clearly entitled to be styled "Master." The only member of the lower classes, properly speaking, among the passengers was John Billington, who was slipped over on the

company when the *Mayflower* touched at Southampton. Colonel Stoddard, however, is inclined slightly to overstress the gentility of the colonists as a whole.

The biographies of the passengers and their genealogies are exceedingly well done, and one notes few slips. The statement that the late President Roosevelt descends five times from Richard Warren requires some slight modification, as in one line, at least, that from Daniel Wilcox, he probably comes from the latter's unknown first wife, rather than from his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of John Cooke.

This carefully compiled account of the Pilgrims should be of the greatest value to the general reader desiring to get in a small space a good picture of the Plymouth Plantation. The excellent index will prove a blessing.

G. ANDREWS MORIARTY.

The Browns of Providence Plantations. Volume I. Colonial Years.

By James B. Hedges. Illustrated. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1952. Pp. xviii, 379. \$6.00.)

Calvin Coolidge's remark that the business of America is business bore the stamp of truth. And yet, despite the American passion for business, the historians of the republic have long spent their best energies on political history while the story of our land's great mercantile enterprises remained unwritten.

James B. Hedges' study, *The Browns of Providence Plantations*—the first in a projected three-volume history—is, therefore, a landmark. For chief among our first families of merchants and entrepreneurs are the Browns. Their story is, as the Introduction states, "... the history in microcosm of many of the evolving forms and facets of the growth of business in the United States." Beginning with the first entry in a family ledger in 1723 (a reference to the "Sloop *Four Bachelors*"), it concludes with the ratification of the Federal Constitution by Rhode Island in 1790.

This is a record of change and adaption. James and Obadiah started out in the maritime trade. But as early as 1753, the Browns were manufacturers as well as shipowners and merchants. Thus it happened that by the mid-eighteenth century they were on their way to equal footing with the merchants of Newport, the grandees of the slave trade in America. The achievement of this older generation of Browns was more than substantial. But the most signifi-

cant part of it was the training of the younger generation of the family. James's four sons had complementary talents; they balanced one another in joint efforts as partners, albeit they went their separate ways after a time. Nicholas was methodical and persevering. Joseph's talents took a mechanical turn, and he played an active part when the brothers built the Hope Furnace and went into the iron business. Brother John, the most assertive, built the finest house in Providence and dispatched the first Rhode Island ship to China. Moses was a Quaker, a keen antislavery man, with an abiding interest in economic problems; to him belongs the credit for recognizing the importance of manufacture on this side of the Atlantic.

Over the years the Browns were involved in an extraordinary variety of commerce. "Some of these voyages were complicated in the extreme and traced strange and many-sided geometrical figures on the surface of the sea." Trade with the Caribbean area was heavy. The cargoes they moved were often paid for in molasses, rum, candles, and spermaceti oil. Gold and silver were always in short supply in the colonies, and exchange was chaotic. Like the vast majority of their fellow colonials, the Browns smuggled and traded with the enemy during the wars of the eighteenth century. They brought slaves to America.

Indeed, the chapter entitled "That Unrighteous Traffic" is one of the most illuminating in the book. The trade books of the ships dispatched by the Browns to the slave coast are cited extensively. The horror of the slave traffic comes alive in the matter-of-fact entries: "woman Slave hanged her Self between decks"; "1 garle Slave Dyed"; "Slaves Rose on us was obliged to fire on them and Destroyed 8 and Several more wounded badly 1 Thye & one Ribs broke"; "some drowned themselves, some starved and others sickened and died." Significant is the revelation that the brothers brought to halt their slaving ventures not merely because the traffic was becoming unprofitable but, rather, as the result of a tussle between champion of the slave trade John and abolitionist Moses over the moral issues involved.

Another chapter reveals that the association of candle manufacturers, the "United Company of Spermaceti Chandlers," were strong advocates of price regulation and restriction.

A very considerable portion of *The Browns of Providence Plantations* relates to the American merchant, his grievances, and the

Revolution. Mr. Hedges gives evidence of the "intimate and vital" ties between the Browns and their associates in the leading colonial seaports. These were an essential preliminary to union against the powers at London, to intercolonial political action. However, the author stresses that the Browns did not "... depend upon the probable separation of the colonies from Britain to relieve them of the necessity of paying the debts at all." They lived up to their honest obligations.

The War for Independence wrought profound changes in the framework of trade. Many of the great mercantile families (in the score of years preceding the struggle the Browns had become one of the outstanding business families in New England) had been ruined by the changes. At the conclusion of the struggle, however, the Browns still held their own.

The Caribbean area trade never regained its prewar importance. The manufacture of spermaceti candles belonged to a vanished era. The Browns divested themselves of the ownership of a distillery. However, trade with the southern metropolis of Charleston was on the increase in the years following the Revolution. The Browns built many vessels for the cod fishery. They also engaged in making the guns for the United States ships of war being built in New England ports.

"Substantial beneficiaries of the conservative revolution," the force underlying the new Constitution, the Browns were not mere speculators whose position was based on profits resulting from the funding and assumption plans of Alexander Hamilton. They were enterprisers in the best and strictest sense, building up the country as they built their own fortune. They met change in a successful fashion: in time they gave their attention to banking, to canals, to turnpikes, and frontier lands.

The continuity of the Browns in commercial affairs is chronicled with care and freedom from bias. The author understands and appreciates the mercantile virtues of care and prudence and planning. This study of the papers of the Browns will have influence upon the image of the businessman in America. He will be seen as a man and as a member of a class not deficient in wisdom and active intelligence and, especially, daring when the need for the quality is real and pressing. Mr. Hedges is judicious; his work will last.

ANTHONY HARRIGAN.

Early English Churches in America, 1607-1807. By Stephen P. Dorsey. (New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. xvi, 206. \$10.00.)

During the eighteenth century, two distinct styles dominated the ecclesiastical architecture of the colonies and of the early republic; and each in turn derived from European and English antecedents. Prior to 1700, the international "Protestant Plain Style" had found expression over here in the familiar and satisfying meetinghouses of New England and, to a lesser degree, was bequeathed to the Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, and Quaker edifices of the Middle Colonies. Also stemming from the earlier century was what might be called the Anglican mode, which at its inception drew heavily on the lingering Gothic feature of the rural parish churches of the England of James I. It is with this second form of architectural development that Mr. Dorsey deals in his new book.

An introductory chapter sketches rapidly but adequately the beginnings of the Church of England in America and its emergence after 1789 as the Protestant Episcopal communion. Because an Anglican establishment existed in the southern provinces and the lower part of New York, and because of the activity of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in planting parishes elsewhere, the Church of England's influence proved truly intercolonial in extent at the same time that it bound the colonies more closely to the Mother Country. Next, Mr. Dorsey describes the nature of worship under the Book of Common Prayer and its profound influence on the interiors of the "English churches." Herein lies the most fundamental and enduring distinction between the Anglican structures and those of the other Protestant denominations. (Mr. Dorsey refrains from using the term "dissenters" in his discussion, knowing full well that in the Middle and New England Colonies the Anglicans were the "dissenters.")

The core of the book is composed of four chapters describing the "churches of the colonial establishment" in Virginia and Maryland, the Carolinas, and the early structures of the region north of Mason and Dixon's line. Careful descriptions of their interiors clearly indicate the American deviations from English norms. One hundred and eighteen plates superbly illustrate and

amplify the brief text. Drawn chiefly from the rich collection of the Historic American Buildings Survey, these photographs, which are admirably reproduced by Oxford, provide an ample introduction to both the interiors and exteriors of the surviving "English churches." In addition, the author supplies what he believes to be a virtually complete list of all extant churches built before 1807 in each area, as well as tables of dates when their construction began.

Intent study of these plates gives one an excellent idea of the architectural elements of the first Anglican churches, and reveals the regional influences modifying their styles. Comparison with the late J. Frederick Kelly's photographs of Connecticut meeting-houses shows the tendency of the "English churches" built and probably designed by local Congregational master-builders to resemble already existing buildings. This similarity was further enhanced by the need to use timber rather than brick or stone as in the colonies to the southward. Mr. Dorsey remarks that everywhere the dominant note was "startling simplicity" in contrast to the more elaborate design and detail of even English rural parish churches. Another fact, of which the public is not so well aware, is that we know comparatively nothing about the men who designed most of the structures. Mr. Dorsey should have mentioned, however, that Quaker Robert Smith, the Philadelphia master-builder, not only planned Presbyterian and Lutheran edifices, but produced his masterpiece for the Church of England in St. Peter's at Philadelphia. Nor is the contribution of Peter Harrison to Anglican architecture in the colonies emphasized, even though he does receive passing mention.

This is a useful and beautiful contribution to the growing corpus of books on colonial architecture. Mr. Dorsey has levied on recent scholarship by architectural and church historians for his data. At times, however, he has not used their studies critically, as when he overlooks the great mass of documents in the Public Record Office and asserts that the papers of the S. P. G. constitute the largest single archive of colonial history. Although it would be difficult, in many cases, to ascertain the date when a church was first opened for services (even though as yet incomplete), such a date would have far more validity, just as the date when a college actually opened for instruction is more accurate than the date of its charter, which often represented merely a pious aspiration. One

could wish also that Mr. Dorsey had drawn some comparisons between urban and country Anglican architecture; between Christ Church at Philadelphia, for example, and St. David's, Radnor, and Trinity Church, Oxford, Pennsylvania.

Anyone contemplating a pilgrimage along the Atlantic coast—along U. S. Route 1—ought to read this book and study its pictures in order to insure complete enjoyment and understanding on his journey.

CARL BRIDENBAUGH.

Henry Adams: Scientific Historian. By William H. Jordy. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1952. Pp. 327. \$5.00.)

Inscrutable, tantalizing, irritating in life, Henry Adams continues so in death. From his grave in Rock Creek cemetery, watched over by St. Gaudens' enigmatic statue, he doubtless grins sardonically at the sober young graduate students wearisomely plumb-ing his irresponsible profundities, as he scoffed at tourists who tried to answer the riddle of the sphinx-like monument to his wife. Maybe a child could give the answers; we can't. The basic question will, I feel sure, never be answered: did he really mean what he said in his late writings? I don't believe *he* knew the answer. One can strip off layer after layer of irony and find no solid bottom. If we hold that he was engaging in elaborate intellectual hoaxes, we are faced with his obviously aching seriousness. If we deem his arguments honest attempts to get at the truth, we are pricked by the sharp tongue he openly hid in his cheek, and crushed beneath his elephantine humor. Maybe the most lasting of his ironies will prove to be the heavy stream of studies seeking to answer the unanswerable questions about Adams. But it's all an exciting game, and, beyond that, necessary and even significant.

William Jordy's *Henry Adams: Scientific Historian* is an absorbing, erudite, stimulating book, easily the most important of the various good books on Adams that have appeared recently. It is no hammock or bedside reading; "pleasure" is not the word to describe what one derives from it. It gives no easy narrative of Adams' life, as does Hume's *Runaway Star*. It gives no new information about its subject, as does Samuels' *The Young Henry Adams*. But it provides something I have not seen elsewhere: a patient, informed analysis of Adams' less familiar writings.

That is not to say that this is the definitive book on Adams; it

does not pretend to be. It is, as the title implies, primarily an analysis of Adams' theory and practice of history, of his notions of "scientific history" and of the way changing scientific concepts should change the historians' concepts. Though at times it still smells slightly of the Ph.D. pot, it is no sterile monograph meticulously exhausting isolated minutiae. Just when Mr. Jordy seems lost—and sure to lose his reader—in a close bit of analysis or a detailed account of the development of some scientific concept, he plunges out of the murk to show us the broad scene that he wants us always to have in view. We see Adams' *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* as a whole; and we see it in analytical pieces, in relation to Comte and other contemporary influences on the idea of scientific history, and as an expression of the hesitant hopefulness of the early Henry. We see *The Tendency of History*, *The Rule of Phase Applied to History*, and the *Letter to American Teachers of History* close up (almost too close) but always in relation to the developments in scientific thought and to Henry's final unhesitating pessimism. If the last word about Adams will never be written, no more, it seems to me, need be done in the way of analyzing the specious metaphors and arguments of these three brilliant pretensions.

The most interesting though not the most valuable chapter is the last, "The Failure," in which Mr. Jordy uses the *Education* and *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* to lead into a discussion of the tensions and complexities of this extremely complicated person. Though he says nothing particularly novel here, he does an admirable job of pulling together the threads of his earlier analysis and showing how Adams' labyrinthine intellections fit into his fascinating psychological pattern. One could wish that more of the book had been like this last chapter. But then the significant if sometimes tedious analyses of Adams' pseudo-scientific thoughts would have been lost—unless the author had possessed the full genius of his subject.

JOHN LYDENBERG.

Religion in the Development of American Culture: 1765-1840. By William Warren Sweet. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1952. Pp. xiv, 338. \$3.50.)

The rôle religion has played in shaping American culture has fascinated observers, domestic and foreign, from Thomas Morton

to our present Supreme Court. The absence of an established church did not blind De Tocqueville to the dominant importance of religion in stabilizing America's national character, and most historical scholars have given up denying that religion was a major cause in bringing over the first families of New England. Now, Professor William Warren Sweet, in a sequel to his detailed study, *Religion in Colonial America*, has set out to show, especially to the remaining materialistic historians, the contributions religion has made to our culture.

He contends, for example, that the vote on ratifying the Constitution divided on religious rather than economic lines, with the Presbyterians in particular opposing ratification. But his case is inconclusive, both because he considers only a few of the opponents, and because he fails to show that they voted against ratification for Presbyterian reasons, rather than because they were back-country men, usually in debt. He is more convincing when he demonstrates that the unestablished churches, like the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and the Catholics, played an important part in securing the addition of the First Amendment. And he documents the work of the churches in giving America both the tradition and the facilities of higher education.

Sweet also makes concrete De Tocqueville's generalization that religion was indispensable for the conservation of society in early America. In an excellent chapter on the West in the early nineteenth century he shows that laity and clergy alike were afflicted with the disorder and latent savagery general in pioneer life; the list of crimes ministers alone committed seems remarkably exhaustive. But Sweet maintains that prudential committees and the system of ecclesiastical trials prevented complete demoralization, and that church life was the strongest civilizing force of the times. He exonerates the great camp meetings of the charge that more souls were made than saved, and he argues that the emotionalism was only incidental to the greater work of re-enforcing traditional religious sanctions.

This is his strongest chapter. In too many, Sweet is so anxious to do justice to every enterprise of every church that he does not attempt to locate the element of religion in the jungle of organizational activity. However remarkable were the techniques developed of providing ministers, Bibles, and tracts to an expanding population in an expanding area—through circuit riders, colpor-

teurs, and a rationalized central organization—these do not constitute religious life, but are simply methods, parallel to those employed by secular institutions to meet similar problems. Such activities absorb much of the church leaders' energy and skill, and, as a result, organizational activity along sectarian lines has been profoundly overemphasized, not only by the churches, but also by historians, for whom the details of schisms and reunions, expanding membership lists, and the formation of national charitable societies provide seductively concrete data.

The consequence of this error is obvious; because these activities involve worldly activities of the churches, they are mistaken for the impact of the church on the world. In evaluating the importance of our national political parties, historians have learned to look beneath the imposing organizational activity, the techniques employed of reaching the people, even their declarations of mutual hostility, to find their real nature and hence their effect on men's lives. Surely it is time for the church historian to apply the same radical discrimination to the organizational fury of the churches.

ROBERT D. CROSS.

Papermaking in Pioneer America. By Dard Hunter. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1952. Pp. xiv, 178. \$6.50.)

Papermaking in Pioneer America comes as the twenty-second work by Dr. Dard Hunter on the subject of papers since his *Handmade Paper and Its Watermarks*, a bibliography published in 1916. Eight of these books have been produced at his private press in Chillicothe, Ohio, on handmade paper made in his own mills. Four of them were printed in type designed, cut, and cast by himself. He designed these books, set the type, and printed them on his hand press, aided recently by his son, Dard Hunter, Jr.; only the binding was done by other hands.

In 1948, when Dard Hunter was notified of having received the Rosenbach Fellowship in Bibliography, he was at work with his son on a large folio volume embracing a history of pioneer papermaking entitled, *Papermaking by Hand in America*, covering the period from 1690 to 1811. For this work his son had designed, cut, and cast a special font of type. Owing to their methods of working, it was necessary to limit the edition to about two hundred copies. For his Rosenbach lectures, Dard Hunter chose the same theme as

treated in the folio volume, embracing additional material. Thus, fortunately, his valuable treatise becomes available to a broader group of students of early American papermaking and bibliography.

The history of papermaking from its invention in A.D. 105 down to its introduction into Pennsylvania in 1690 is traced in the first chapter. The techniques of Oriental and Occidental craftsmen in making sheets of paper, originally for use as a medium for writing and finally as the only suitable material for printing, are described. The importance of this application cannot be overestimated, for as H. G. Wells so truly observed, "It was the introduction of paper from the East that made practical the long latent method of printing."

If the elusive papermaking techniques are too briefly described to be lucid to the uninitiated, they may be readily comprehended by referring to *Papermaking* (1947), a fully illustrated book by the same author. The early manufacturing phases are elaborated upon in the second chapter of *Papermaking in Pioneer America*, which contains also an explanation of how "wove" and "laid" papers occur and how watermarks are produced, including brief historical notes.

The body of the book gives, in chronological order, accounts of the first paper mill in each of the eighteen states prior to the introduction, in 1817, of the first American paper machine. It may come as a surprise to find "even though the art of printing was introduced into the Massachusetts Bay Colony as early as 1638 or 1639, the older craft of papermaking did not find a place among the industries of New England until about ninety years later," whereas the first mill in the Colonies had been established near Philadelphia in 1690.

Of particular interest to bibliographers is the chapter dealing specifically with the "Pioneer Mould Maker," Nathan Sellers, whose product was so indispensable that in 1776 he was exempted from military service, by a resolution of Congress, to pursue his trade, supplying moulds to the papermakers. His account books, covering seven hundred pages with records of the production of his shop from 1776 to 1820, are in the possession of The American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Among the bank-note moulds listed is a pair made with seventy-two watermarking letters, in 1792, for the Union Bank of Boston.

The first and only check list of American papermakers, following the concluding chapter, "American Papermakers, 1690-1817," is a valuable addition to the book, for, as Dard Hunter states, "practically every other American trade has previously been recorded by check lists giving the names of the old craftsmen"—and thanks after all to the existence of paper itself!

Twenty-two figures appear in a final signature of *Papermaking in Pioneer America*, illustrating respectively, the making of a sheet of paper by hand, a drying loft, and a typical American-made mould. The other plates reproduce watermarks used by the pioneer American hand-paper mills. The University of Pennsylvania Press is to be commended for the attractive format and the good quality of rag content, machine-made paper, contributing worthily to a volume of permanent value.

WILLIAM BOND WHEELWRIGHT.

Howells & Italy. By James L. Woodress, Jr. (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1952. Pp. xi, 223. \$3.50.)

Why didn't a Columbus, Ohio, newspaperman named William Dean Howells join the Union Army in 1861? He was the ideal age: 23 or 24 years old. He was a bachelor, and apparently sound in wind and limb. Moreover, he was an open admirer of Lincoln and his principles, having written a Lincoln biography for the Republican campaign of 1860. But no; instead of getting into the fight, he applied for a government post and got out of the country. In November, 1861, he sailed from New York on the S.S. *City of Glasgow* to serve as American consul at Venice.

Our Venetian consulate was Howells' headquarters for the four years of the war. When he next set foot on American soil, Lincoln was dead and the shooting was over. What effects, direct and indirect, did this significant experience in exile have upon Howells the man and Howells the man of letters? On the former score Professor Woodress, of Butler University, has virtually nothing new to say; which is, if disappointing, not too astonishing, for nobody yet has been able to tell us much about Howells' personal life and private motivations. On the other hand, Professor Woodress makes gratifyingly clear the range and depth of the Italian influence on Howells' writings—the extent to which Italy may be credited with converting an obscure Midwestern journalist and earnest but

clumsy poet into an essayist of distinction, a travel writer of charm, and a critic and novelist of major importance.

The Venetian job was, as consular jobs went even in those palmy days, a joke. Hence Howells had about all the leisure he could want for reading, traveling, tramping around art museums, and mailing back contributions to such organs of culture as the *Boston Advertiser* and *The North American Review*. When in 1864 the *North American*, in the person of James Russell Lowell, accepted an unsolicited essay entitled "Recent Italian Comedy," Howells all but leaped into the Grand Canal with excitement; it was, he later testified, a "turning point" in his career. *Venetian Life* (1866), his first book upon his return from Europe, marked another turning point, for it was highly admired and avidly bought. Almost before he knew it, the young ex-newspaperman had become a literary figure, hobnobbing with such as Mr. Lowell, Professor Norton, and Dr. Holmes at the Wednesday evening meetings of Longfellow's Dante Club, and debating with himself whether to accept a proffered lectureship in Modern Italian Literature at Harvard.

Professor Woodress most diligently traces the impact of Italy on Howells' prose and verse, item by item, noting the particular importance in this respect of the plays of Goldoni and providing in general a shrewd and readable scholarly survey of a special field. There are relatively few ardent Howellsians around nowadays, but these few should not miss *Howells & Italy*.

RALPH THOMPSON.

The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt. Edited by Elting E. Morison. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1952. Vols. v and vi. Pp. xxvi, viii, 1,715. Ills. 23, Charts 3. \$20.)

These volumes cover the most successful and historically important period of Theodore Roosevelt's career—his second term as President. Whatever one's opinion of Roosevelt, no one has accused him of dullness; these letters present a fascinating and often amusing panorama of the politics of the period and much else besides. They are unrivalled bedside reading.

In general, the letters corroborate the usual picture of Roosevelt—such as his public display of physical courage (going down in an experimental submarine to show naval personnel that he would not ask them to do anything he feared to do himself), ego-

tism and condescension ("The Kaiser behaved very well in this business"), devotion to his family (numerous letters about every detail of his children's lives), distrust of both Wall Street and the "lunatic fringe" of reformers (both receive fervent and frequent denunciation).

The letters also reveal why Roosevelt's stock has been rising recently, after a slump which began when Woodrow Wilson appeared on the national scene. Although Roosevelt sometimes behaved childishly, although he often had little logical or philosophical basis for action, although his knowledge was broad rather than deep, he somehow possessed an intuitive grasp of major issues. He realized that for good or ill the United States could no longer isolate itself, that events in far-off Morocco and Manchuria were inevitably our business, that in an anarchic society of national states we could act effectively only if our military power was commensurate with our national interests. He sensed that large-scale industrialism was a fact which could not be exorcised, that it was no solution to unscramble great business concerns by "trust-busting," that government and business must somehow work out a new relationship which would promote the general welfare without destroying private property or business incentive.

Above all, Roosevelt's correspondence reveals his knowledge of the business of politics. He had extraordinary mastery of the tactics of effective political action, whether the business at hand were the appointment of a district judge in Oregon, the improvement of the diplomatic corps, digging the Panama Canal, or enlisting Democratic support for a bill repudiated by leaders of his own party. Even more remarkable, perhaps, was his ability to recognize the logic of events even when they contradicted his preconceptions or ambitions.

In most respects the editing of these volumes is admirable. The letters are arranged so as to illuminate major aspects of Roosevelt's career, such as his handling of the panic of 1907 and his selection of a successor. It is disappointing, however, that relatively little emphasis is given to Roosevelt's great services to the cause of conservation. Both the footnotes and the introduction to the two volumes contain occasional flippancies which seem out of place in a work of such importance. The introduction, written by the editor, contains astute comments on Roosevelt's philosophy of life and attitude toward political power. It is marred, however, by a

thoughtless characterization of the period 1901-1909 as an era of "a kind of noisy jubilation." A rather unconvincing discussion of the traits of the liberal and the conservative finally places Roosevelt in the latter category.

HENRY WILKINSON BRAGDON.

Melville's Mardi: A Chartless Voyage. By Merrell R. Davis. *Yale Studies in English*, Volume 119. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952. Pp. xv, 240. \$4.00.)

The notable service Merrell Davis's study of *Mardi* performs is the full disclosure of indebtedness that, in F. O. Matthiessen's phrase, made Melville's third book "A Source-Book for Plenitude." Mr. Davis is a superb detective. He not only tracks down the sources of names, incidents, and symbolisms large and small, but gives convincing data of the unfolding of the book. What Melville assimilated—his recently purchased books, the domestic circle's interest in popular romance, current lectures in astronomy, discussions of political events at home and abroad, the publishers' notice of the sales of *Typee* and *Omoo*, and reviewers' displeasure—all this is here in detail; everything but the "something unmanageable" in himself. For it is the intention of this study to verify, to make the facts tell the story, and only in the smallest way to interpret. Mr. Davis repudiates and dismisses "studies . . . committed to the subjective elements in Melville's books." His aim is not to explore, as Sedgwick did, the world of mind; he is not even sufficiently interested in Melville's borrowings to follow their impact on his growing powers, as, for example, Matthiessen did with Thomas Browne, a book of direct consequence for *Mardi*. Because of these self-imposed restrictions (and within them Mr. Davis's book has its excellences), the extensive materials Mr. Davis provides toward a fuller interpretation of *Mardi* will have to await the critic who includes in his aim the relation of *Mardi* to the rest of Melville's work and who starts with a more complex view of literary creation.

It seems to me that one can be just as overly cautious in avoiding the intentional fallacy in external as well as intrinsic criticism. To eliminate the author (as a creative personality) in either case is patent reduction; to deny that *Mardi* was the allegory of Melville's inner life is one thing, but to assert—by the implication of method—that an author's choice of symbols and themes is fortui-

tous, that the central Lamia-motif of the quest, for example, is merely a literary device, is another. One must account for the deeper tensions of the book, those of faith and doubt, of purity and sensuality, the tone of disillusionment, the militancy and energy. After all, it wasn't for nothing that Evert Duyckinck called the Melville of this period "old Arminius," or that Melville spoke of the book's higher purpose and carefully distinguished the romance as a form permitting "freedom & invention," adding in the same breath that he had a "longing to plume my powers for a flight. . . ." The books he read at this time, I suggest, were more than sources: they were instruments of liberation. If Yoomy has his parallels in Shelley, if Babbalanja knows Proclus and Coleridge, if Byron's *The Giaour* and *Childe Harold* are unmistakably there, they are not of the same order of importance as Bennett and Ellis on the South Seas. They are books that were central to the man as well as the artist. The allegory of *Mardi* is hardly a vesture, and yet it shows that one change in Melville was his awareness of "the polysensuum," of "significances."

In spite of the valuable delving, the questions we ask about this difficult book are not answered by Mr. Davis's study. The first quarter of his book goes back to the publishing history of *Typee* and *Omoo* in order to prove that *Mardi* was a new departure for Melville. A larger portion is concerned with establishing the thesis that *Mardi* passed through three stages of composition and that Melville wrote on after May, 1848, when his wife said that the book was completed. The remaining pages of analysis, however, make the "new departure" a continuation of the travel writer's methods. Mr. Davis stresses Melville's attempts to create suspense, his borrowing of materials for fresh sensations, his difficulties with plot—all externally, however, without accounting for Melville's development, his new social, philosophical, literary, and personal interests which are, in *Mardi*, poorly consolidated but genuine signs of his enlargement. For *Mardi* is an unusual departure: a new "style" bespeaking a new man. It is, if you will, a romance of growth, of exploration and uncertainty. Its true unity is on the level of symbolic action, pointing backwards and forwards to the recurrent symbolic acts of Melville's work. One of its significant departures is the rich perspectivism and the conversations of Media, Yoomy, Mohi, and Babbalanja—characters, incidentally, that were of Melville's own creating and whose incessant talk, it seems

to me, is a mode of thinking things through that Melville abandoned for the dramatic conflict of his best books. That Taji seldom speaks and in the end does not follow the others to Serenia is not necessarily a requirement of the literary device: it reflects Melville's inordinate desire for uncontaminated good—those high aspirations which doomed him to gloom, but which were still so finely poised here that the acknowledgment of the good of Serenia could form his tragic sense.

SHERMAN PAUL.

Brooks Adams—Constructive Conservative. By Thornton Anderson. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1951. Pp. 250. \$3.75.)

This book will be welcomed by students of American intellectual history. The imaginative character of his work has made Henry Adams the object of much specialized study. Except for a few important articles, however, Brooks Adams has been overlooked—except when considered more or less incidentally in inquiries concerned with those elements, historical and psychological, which have gone into the making of American civilization. Thus Thornton Anderson should be hailed for producing a clear and stimulating estimate of the man and his ideas, without sacrificing the virtues of sound scholarship.

In simplest terms, Dr. Anderson may be said to have traced the significant and pointed enterprise in which Brooks Adams engaged. And Dr. Anderson's researches have constantly been controlled by one aim. Along with other thoughtful observers of the moral and political chaos of the late nineteenth century, he has called attention to the milieu which was for Brooks, as for Henry, the source of his theories and the raw material for the better society he tried so long to build. Through his historical inquiry the author has uncovered Adams' strength as well as his fads and foibles.

As a clue to Brooks's work, the student of American studies must chart the course which he followed. And the landmarks stressed by Dr. Anderson are worth noting. He gives us a striking picture, for example, of the emergence at Harvard of Brooks's probing doubts. College enlarged Brooks's interest in the world. And yet he might have left Harvard relatively unchanged had he not been stimulated by several instructors.

For example, Adams early came under the strong influence of

John Fiske. It did not matter to Adams that Fiske's ideas were not as carefully thought out as those of his colleagues: his dashing manner won Adams. Fiske was a popularizer. His lectures on Darwin and Spencer had a deep challenge; and it may be that Adams got from Fiske directly some of the basic ideas—Newtonian space and time, the conservation of energy, and Darwinian evolution—which he used in his arresting thesis, "The Law of Civilization and Decay." Here was a huge page for the future historian. It marked the germination of an idea which Brooks exploited during most of his writing life.

Dr. Anderson also mentions Francis Bowen, who taught philosophy at Harvard. Certainly Bowen's notion that depreciation in the value of currency, was frequently resorted to by governments in the Middle Ages always appealed to Adams. Other members of the faculty who probably influenced Adams were Henry W. Torrey, Andrew P. Peabody, William Wells Newell, and Ephraim Whitman Gurney. Professor Torrey imbued Brooks with the meaning of history, the others taught him the similarity of the attributes of man to those of the other animals and the importance, even in man, of instinct. Brooks Adams is revealed in these men.

By far the most original part of Dr. Anderson's book, however, lies in his brilliant analysis of the provocative ideas which Brooks put on paper. Much new matter has been added on points of especial interest to those engaged in American studies. It is instructive to note the breadth of the canvas achieved in a text of less than 210 pages. The author has analyzed the mental masonry of Adams at Harvard. Treatment of democracy and Brooks's searching studies of monetary policies in world history require further introductory material. Two other chapters deal almost exclusively with his theories of education and administration. Thus, in a study devoted primarily to an intellectual biography, six chapters are needed to give historical background to the thought of Adams or to cover the problems he faced. There can be no doubt that this emphasis is justified.

To this reviewer, the thing of first significance in Adams is his theory of world history. In "The Law of Civilization and Decay," he applied a cyclical theory with conclusions almost as pessimistic as those of Spengler (whom he anticipated) and the other modern theorists, Toynbee and Sorokin. Everyone will agree with Dr. Anderson's thesis that Adams was among the first writers to formu-

late a treatment of world history. Not everyone, however, will concur in his diagnosis of Adams' major weakness. Other competent scholars will contend that Adams' book reminds us that his approach to history demonstrates the need for viewing men and the past in terms of assumptions which transcend ordinary life and experience. Like many another theorist of world history, Adams soaked up the temper and outlook of his own society and age. He worked basically from the conceptions of Darwin and the impetus that they gave to nineteenth-century science. As such his theory shares the weaknesses of Spengler, who was clearly influenced by German idealism and the romanticist school of political theory; of Toynbee and Sorokin, whose longing for spiritual and religious truth, however understandable in psychological terms, again puts their work on a foundation other than historical; and, finally, of the Marxists whose harsh approach to the realities of existence displays upon examination the cloven hoof of the Hegelian dialectic.

But this criticism of Adams should not blind us to his importance. He did not stop thinking at the age of forty-eight, when he wrote "The Law of Civilization and Decay." Viewed as a whole his thought had some impact during his own times and much meaning for the present age. Adams' writings, taken together, make a remarkably interesting story which acquires by the last page more significance than appeared on the first.

DAVID D. DENKER.

SHORT NOTICES

Salt Rivers of the Massachusetts Shore. By Henry F. Howe. Rivers of America Series, Vol. 45. (New York: Rinehart & Co. 1951. Pp. xiv, 370. \$4.00.)

This pleasant little volume is both more and less than the title indicates. It is really a useful and readable general introduction to the early history of Massachusetts, discussing the background of the Plymouth settlement, the nature of the theocracy, the approach to the Revolution, its naval aspects, John Adams, and much of that sort. All that was beyond what the title led one to expect.

The salt rivers themselves, however, remain elusive throughout the whole work. About every ten or twelve pages, the author acts as though he had to drag them into the story, but the sum total of space devoted to them is relatively meager. The shipbuilding on the old North River, which was one of the first things the subject suggested, rates barely a page; the other streams receive similar cursory treatment. The Charles had already had its volume in the series and the Merrimack is to have one, so they were out. One excuse for taking in the whole of Massachusetts Bay was that it was presumably, in prehistoric times, the mouth of a great river coming down from the White Mountains; geologic disturbances, however, blocked its original outlet and it found the sea at Newburyport as the Merrimack. The author also brings out the fact that the remaining little rivers had their fall line close to the coast, thus discouraging access to the interior. Beyond that, anyone wanting full details about the salt rivers will still have to look elsewhere. On the other hand, if one wants a compact, pleasing, and generally competent story of early Massachusetts, drawn mostly from existing printed sources, this will serve the purpose well.

Harvard University.

ROBERT G. ALBION.

Joseph B. Eastman: Servant of the People. By Claude Moore Fuess. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1952. Pp. xv, 363. \$5.00.)

In 1905 Mr. Eastman became secretary of the Boston Public Franchise League, a reform group led by Louis Brandeis; Brandeis

suggested his appointment to the Massachusetts Public Service Commission and, in 1919, to the Interstate Commerce Commission, where he served until his death in 1944. In the crises of these years he figured also as Coördinator of Transportation during the depression and Director of Defense Transportation during the war. Though his views were often controversial—he urged government ownership of the railroads in the 1920's—his ability and integrity made him an exemplary public administrator. This biography appears under the auspices of the Joseph B. Eastman Foundation, raised posthumously by his friends to preserve his ideal of public service.

As Commissioner, Eastman had to guard the public interest in a privately managed transportation system, and incidentally to define the anomalous position of the independent regulatory commission, with its legislative, judicial and executive functions, in relation to the federal structure. While he suggests these problems, Mr. Fuess seeks primarily "a faithful picture of [Eastman's] character and achievements." This conception of biography leads him to an anecdotal, loose-jointed chronicle in which events amply testify that "Eastman was at heart a very simple person, who based his conduct on elementary principles, all of them included in the moral law." Although this volume is without documentation, it reveals that the Eastman papers, now at Amherst, may be of great value to scholars.

JAMES LEIBY.

Harvard University.

The Rise of Modern America, 1865-1951. By Arthur Meier Schlesinger. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. Pp. xvii, 607. \$5.25.)

This is the fourth edition of a book that has long since become a standard text in American colleges. The revision is the first in ten years and brings the work up-to-date on the critical events of the last decade. Almost one hundred pages deal with events since America's entry into the second World War. The balance of the book has also been thoroughly reviewed to take account of recent scholarship. Thoughtfully illustrated and supplemented by good bibliographies, Professor Schlesinger's account of modern America is a very useful teaching tool.

OSCAR HANDLIN.

Harvard University.

Frontier of Freedom: The Soul and Substance of America, Portrayed in One Extraordinary Village, Old Deerfield, Massachusetts. By Samuel Chamberlain and Henry N. Flynt. (New York: Hastings House. 1952. N.p. \$6.00.)

Frontier of Freedom is a portrait of Deerfield, Massachusetts, the result of a triple collaboration between Samuel Chamberlain, Henry N. Flynt, and Mr. Chamberlain's camera. Many people who would want to own this book if they knew what it contains will never suspect the contents from the title. Hundreds of parents of Deerfield Academy boys have visited the town with only a vague suspicion of the truth and beauty which the book reveals. Those who read will want to go again to Deerfield, to see the staunch old houses which staunch men and women built here, and in which they lived out their lives. Mr. Flynt's brief introductory history prepares the eye and the mind to see and to comprehend what Mr. Chamberlain's camera reveals. The camera omits nothing of these houses, from their severe fronts to the trundle bed in the children's room at the Ashley's. The interior photographs are an encyclopedia of the articles in daily use, the thousand and one "things" which were a part of life in a New England village two or three hundred years ago. To one—perhaps prejudiced—reader, this book is by itself better than a week in Williamsburg. Perhaps it is not surprising that in such surroundings, such a man as Doctor Boyden and his Deerfield Academy have become a legend in the land.

BEN AMES WILLIAMS.

Searsmont, Maine.

American Conservatism in the Age of Enterprise. By Robert Green McCloskey. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1951. Pp. 193. \$3.25.)

This is a series of essays on William Graham Sumner, Yale professor and pamphleteer, Stephen J. Field, Supreme Court Justice, and Andrew Carnegie, industrialist, philanthropist, and philosopher of the Gospel of Wealth. Mr. McCloskey analyzes the thought of these three men as illustrative of the way in which the democratic symbols were captured by conservative apologists for industrial capitalism. Liberty, Mr. McCloskey argues, was to Americans of the Jefferson-Jackson period, primarily moral; economic free-

dom was important only as it contributed to the development of the morally free individual. After the Civil War this relation was reversed: economic liberty came to be viewed as primary, the end instead of a means; the same symbols continued to be used, their substance transformed. The author implies no hypocrisy, no conspiracy, no deliberate perversion of the early democratic ideals. Indeed, the tragedy lay in just the fact that the replacement of moral by material values was far more than a device of capitalist spokesmen: it was one aspect of the changing popular ethos and increasingly became embodied in a new folklore.

Sumner, Field, and Carnegie are dead now and with them their particular formulations of conservatism. But their voices are still heard, vulgarized and more persuasive, in such N.A.M. sirens as Henry J. Taylor and Fulton Lewis, Jr. Much of our plight today—international as well as national—can be laid to the inversion of the original democratic doctrines. Mr. McCloskey does not trace the perversions down to the present day. But maybe he is saving that for a subsequent book. I hope so.

JOHN LYDENBERG.

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